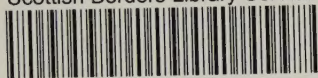


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LIFE AND MINISTRY

OF THE

REV. ADAM THOMSON, D.D.,
OF COLDSTREAM.

LIFE AND MINISTRY

OF THE

REV. ADAM THOMSON, D.D.,

COLDSTREAM,

AND HIS LABOURS

FOR FREE AND CHEAP BIBLE PRINTING.

BY HIS SON-IN-LAW,

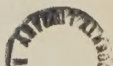
REV. P. LANDRETH,

AUTHOR OF 'STUDIES AND SKETCHES IN MODERN LITERATURE,' ETC. ETC.

EDINBURGH:

ANDREW ELLIOT, PRINCES STREET.

1869.



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PREFACE.

THE unusual delay in the issue of this volume has been owing neither to any hesitation about Dr. Thomson *deserving*, and the public *desiring* a biography, nor to any presumptuous confidence that the public would gratefully welcome it at any time. A long interval after Dr. Thomson's death had elapsed before the task of preparing a memoir was assigned to the writer; though it is but fair to the latter to say, that he had been repeatedly indicated by the Doctor's own choice, if there was to be an account at all. The writer, however, was firmly persuaded that the Rev. Adam Thomson was by far the most competent person, both from his peculiar intimacy with his father's character and career, and from his eminent abilities, to produce a satisfactory representation; but Mr. Thomson, having been lately placed over a very important congregation in Sydney, and raised to the honourable yet onerous post of being the first Moderator in the General Assembly of the three Presbyterian bodies of New South Wales, which had been organized, largely through his labours, into one Church, was involved in so many official engagements that he could not undertake this biography, or even contribute to the present volume a chapter of the personal reminiscences which he would have made so valuable and interesting.

For the delay which has occurred since the task was assumed by the author, he has had but too cogent reasons in the state of his health, and affliction in his family.

He has endeavoured to place Dr. Thomson in the midst of his brethren and friends, and under the influence of contemporary events, instead of isolating him and exhibiting his single figure. The Doctor was eminently social in his nature, and co-operative in his labours. Not a few of the excellent men, who were his associates, are fast passing out of memory ; and they deserve to be recalled.

The chapter on Dr. Thomson's struggles for free and cheap Bible printing, has been rendered more unpleasantly controversial than was expected, in consequence of various misrepresentations that occur in the recently published memoir of 'The Life and Labours of Dr. John Campbell' of London.

EDINBURGH, *4th December* 1868.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AT COLDSTREAM—EARLY DAYS AND SCHOOL EDUCATION.

[1779-1796.]

PAGE

The one Home for his long Life—Scenery and stirring Associations of the Neighbourhood: Wark and Norham Castles, Flodden Field, the Papal Bull in Coldstream Abbey, General Monk and the Coldstream Guards—More peaceful Memories: The Father of the two Erskines at Cornhill and Monilaws—Former times in the District—Limited and slow Locomotion—Adam Thomson's Parentage and Kindred—His sturdy Infancy—Goes to the Parish School of his Uncle, the Rev. Mr. M'Lean, a Monopolist of many functions—Learning interrupted by a serious Illness—Cured by an 'irregular' Practitioner, after his case was pronounced hopeless, and his grave clothes prepared—Preservation from a Flood—Returns to School—Various influences move him to look forward to the Ministerial Office—The Death of two Brothers and a Sister—Eminent Preachers at Coldstream Sacrament: Davidson of Dunse, Robert Hall of Kelso, Coventry of Stitchell, Shanks of Jedburgh, Blackhall of Berwick—Tent-preaching on Tweed Green—Attends Fellowship Meetings—Death of his Mother in the thirty-fifth year of her age—His elder Brother Peter at College; and in the Summer Vacations his talk about Edinburgh Professors and Preachers—Adam sets out for Edinburgh College in November 1796,

1-73

CHAPTER II.

STUDIES AT COLLEGE AND DIVINITY HALL.

[1796-1804.]

Occupies the Room in Baxter's Close in which Robert Burns lodged on his first visit to Edinburgh—University Professors: Hill, Dalzel, Finlayson, Dugald Stewart, etc.—The mental stimulus from the Lectures of Finlayson, and especially of Stewart—The attraction for all classes in the Preaching

of Struthers, which was pronounced in fashionable circles 'as good as the best Play'—His Trafalgar Sermon—Contemporary Secession Preachers: Drs. M'Crie, Hall, and Peddie—'New Light' Controversy—Pamphlets by Drs. Lawson and Peddie—The completeness of Adam Thomson's College Course—Summer Vacations at Home, and also in Families near Horndean and Wooler, and Incidents that left a deep Impression—In the Autumn of 1779 enters the Divinity Hall at Selkirk—Dr. Lawson—Visit of Dr. Mason of New York—The Hall Critics—Choice Friends—Saturday Rambles, . 74-131

CHAPTER III.

TERM AS A PROBATIONER, AND EARLY YEARS OF MINISTRY AT
COLDSTREAM.
[1804-1816.]

Licence to preach—The 'Probationer' of former times—First Engagements—Ordered to London, but unexpectedly detained, and led to Preach in his native place—London: Parliamentary Debates, Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, Wilberforce, Wyndham, Canning, Tierney, etc.—Pulpit Orators: Rowland Hill, etc.—Intimacy with Dr. Waugh; Miles Lane and Crown Court Congregations; their Procedure to obtain him as Pastor—Calls from Horndean and Leslie—Synod's Decision—Return to Scotland—Must be rebuked by his Presbytery for being some days too late through an unfavourable Voyage—Appeal to Synod—Mr. Hall of Kelso, and Mr. Comrie of Penicuik—Calls from Alnwick and Coldstream—Proofs of Popularity in his native place from the old 'Collections Book'—Character of his Preaching—The Synod on 'Scarcity of Preachers'—Mr. Thomson prefers the Call from Coldstream—Before his Ordination, his Brother, Minister first at Whitby and next at Leeds, dies—Ordained 12th March 1806—The Parish Ministers of the Merse in the beginning of the Century—Their Seceding Neighbours—Mr. Thomson's Sphere—The View he took of his Duties—His Pulpit Preparations—Three Services on Sabbath, and Village Preaching on Week-day Evenings—After some years, changes his method of preparing Discourses—He premeditates, but no longer writes them out at full length, or commits them to Memory—Three Methods discussed—Attempt by Dr. Chalmers to abandon the Reading Method—'Diets of Examination' for all the Members, young and old, of the Congregation—His Marriage—His Evangelizing Tour in the North of England—Extracts from his 'Journal'—Receives a Call from Leeds to be his Brother's Successor—Declines it—Is sent, along with Rev.

CONTENTS.

ix

PAGE

Mr. Brotherston of the Church of Scotland, by the Scottish Missionary Society, to preach in the North of Ireland—Extracts from his 'Journal'—His attachment to Liberal Politics—Hears O'Connell, Sheil, etc.—Ecclesiastical Affairs in Ireland—His early and enthusiastic support of the cause of Missions— <i>The Sermon of Mr. Hall (Kelso)</i> —Curious Letter—Anecdotes about Mr. Hall—Extracts from Mr. Thomson's 'Commonplace Book,' giving his daily Occupations— <i>Resurrectionist Panic</i> —'Mort-Safes' and a Watch-house provided by the Inhabitants of Coldstream for Lennel Churchyard—English Tour in behalf of the Scottish Missionary Society—Interview with the great Robert Hall of Leicester—Extract from 'Journal,'	132-304
---	---------

CHAPTER IV.

HIS PUBLICATIONS.

[1807-1850.]

Memoir and Sermons about his Brother, published at the urgent request of the Leeds Congregation—Richard Winter Hamilton, who succeeded that Brother (the Chapel having passed from the Scotch Presbyterians into the hands of the Independents), had a similar request to publish a Sermon which he had preached on the Execution of a Forger, and complied, greatly to the injury of his Reputation—Mr. Hamilton's early Productions—Letters from him to Mr. Thomson about the Diploma which the latter was seeking to procure for the former—Mr. Thomson writes the Life of Toplady for a Berwick Publisher—Issues the Funeral Sermon which he had preached at Selkirk for Dr. Lawson—His 'Cure for Pauperism'—'Address' at the formation of a 'Friendly Society' in connection with the Coldstream Congregation after the first visitation of Cholera— <i>Comparative View of English and Scottish Dissenters</i> —His Intercourse with Evangelical Churchmen in Scotland: Rev. Dr. Hunter, etc.; and with English Independents and Baptists—The Voluntary Controversy, its keenness and universality—Mr. Thomson's many Pamphlets on the Question— <i>Consolation for Christian Mourners</i> —Pamphlets on the Bible Monopoly,	305-361
--	---------

CHAPTER V.

HIS ATTENTION TO CHURCH BUSINESS.

[1806-1851.]

Attendance at Church Courts, and attention to the business—An eager yet considerate Advocate of Progress—Burgher and
--

Anti-Burgher views of Paraphrases and Hymns for Congregational Worship—Union of the two bodies—Mr. Thomson and his new Brethren—Scottish University Reform—Reform Bill—Earl Grey's visit to Edinburgh—His welcome in crossing the Border—The return of Mr. C. Marjoribanks, the first Liberal Representative of Berwickshire—Mr. Marjoribanks' Death, and the Erection of a Monument to him at Coldstream—Mr. Thomson's interest in Legal Reforms, especially in merciful modifications of the Criminal Code—Execution of a mere juvenile at Coventry—Scott the Mellerstain Gamekeeper—The Canadian Prisoners—'Easter Dues' in Berwick, and Dr. Thomson's vindication of Mr. Peden—His last appearance at the Presbytery, before he was stricken with Paralysis,	362-404
--	---------

CHAPTER VI.

HIS LABOURS FOR FREE AND CHEAP BIBLES.

[1837-1851.]

The Bible Monopoly indefensible in every aspect—The British and Foreign Bible Society should have been its earliest and steadiest Assailant—Held in Scotland by a Lady and Gentleman—Dr. Thomson's attention called to it by Mr. Childs—The narrative of Dr. Thomson's manifold Labours in the cause of Free Bibles—His Examinations by the Parliamentary Committee; his appeals to the Synod and the Public; his remonstrances with the Government; and his interviews and correspondence with Members of the Legislature—The triumphant issue for Scotland—Unfettered and Untaxed Bibles in Scotland—Dr. Thomson's Organization of the Scottish Board for Bible Circulation—The Procedure of the British and Foreign Bible Society—Dr. Campbell joins Dr. Thomson—The immense Reduction of Bible prices by the English Monopolists—The Abandonment of the Conflict by Dr. Campbell—The causes which led to the Establishment of the Free Bible Press at Coldstream—Its overthrow, and the causes—The 'Thomson Testimonial'—The Leaders, and the Presentation at Coldstream,	405-553
---	---------

CHAPTER VII.

THE CLOSE OF HIS MINISTRY AND HIS LIFE.

[1847-1861.]

Not distracted in his Ministry by his non-ministerial Occupations—Obtains a 'Helper and Successor'—Suddenly seized by Para-

CONTENTS.

xi

PAGE

lysis—Henceforth disabled for Walking and Writing, but his Mental Faculties were untouched—Resigned and Cheerful—A far heavier Calamity in the Death of Mrs. Thomson—The Departure of his Son, the Rev. Adam Thomson of Hawick, for Sydney, New South Wales—A remarkably severe Winter prostrates Dr. Thomson—His last Illness and Death—Tributes to Dr. Thomson from the Rev. John Ker, Glasgow, and Dr. M'Gavin, Dundee, from Thomas Clarkson, Dr. Robert Vaughan, Dr. Halley, and Lord Murray—Sketches by the Rev. Drs. Jack and Cairns—Conclusion,	554-622
--	---------

APPENDIX.—Address to Dr. Thomson by the Testimonial Committee,	623-624
--	---------

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AT COLDSTREAM—EARLY DAYS, AND SCHOOL EDUCATION.

(1779-1796.)



DAM THOMSON was born on the 8th November 1779 at Coldstream, where he was also destined to spend his long life, to open and close his fifty-five years' service in the Christian ministry, and to devise and accomplish great things for the free and cheap circulation of the Scriptures, by means of a local organization, which yet operated over the empire and its colonies, so that 'Coldstream Bibles' entered almost every market to compete with the issues of the English university monopolists, and soon compelled these to submit to an unparalleled reduction in the prices. In spite of several invitations to settle elsewhere, and many calls and tendencies to be widely excursive, his designation from first to last was, 'of Coldstream.' He often travelled through England, and visited London, long before the iron road had attracted its crowds of passengers, and when his brethren, if required or inclined to venture beyond a 'Sabbath-day's journey,' restricted their boldest locomotion to a short ride on the slow stage-coach, or on a slower pony; but this occasional tour-making did not break up the continuity of his energetic life at home, far less did it weaken his attachment to his own little town on the border.

In almost every clerical biography, a birthplace is a mere starting-point, which is slightly noticed, and is soon forgotten

in favour of the sphere of manly action and experience ; but, in the case of the subject of this memoir, he had only one home through all the seasons and changes of his life ; and around Coldstream grew the associations of his manhood and old age, unsevered from, and quickened by, those of his childhood and youth ; whilst *there*, too, the aspirations of the minister blended with those of the stripling and the student, and the ties of the husband and the father met with the earlier ones of son and brother. The local objects and scenes, on which the new and the old threads of association hung, were so near each other, that few of these threads could be lost or broken—as their frequent entwining with each other, and around some common supports, had given them strength—though they might be slender as the gossamer ; and they were charged with the suggestiveness and fascination of all his former days, and could be disentangled singly out of their network, and made responsive to any special memory that had been stirred. Around every spot, which, though familiar, still lay in the golden orient of youth, there was such an involution of past with present ideas, sentiments, and impressions, as transfigured both them and it ; and, freshening them all, the Tweed rolled on majestically. There is nothing fanciful in the supposition,—that, of the man who has never been transplanted from his native place, the roots strike more deeply and widely into the soil, thence drawing more of vitality ; and the branches shoot more expansively into the air and the sunshine, thence receiving more of verdure.

There could not, indeed, have been found a more eligible locality—for the one home of a long lifetime of labour and contentment—than the small border town. Coldstream, with little that is beautiful in its houses, or venerable in its churches, and with no regularity or design in its streets, can boast of a most delectable situation, which, at the different seasons, surrounds it with landscapes exquisitely representative of, and

harmonious with, the 'rolling year;' for *there* the autumn and the winter put on a picturesque and complete assemblage of their characteristics, and these yield to an equally striking display of the glorious transformations of spring and summer. Here, at the line of junction between the two sister countries, the choicest attractions both of Scottish and of English scenery are exhibited, not only in the felicitous arrangement, but in the thorough blending or interchange of their individual attractions: hence the question of, Where Scotland ends and England begins, can be as little determined by the aspect of the land boundaries, as by the colour, the volume, or the rapidity of the waters in the middle of the Tweed; and the loveliness of the landscape, like the majesty of the river, belongs to both countries in shares that cannot be distinguished. Within the circle of a few miles on each side of Coldstream, are included almost all the varieties of bold and beautiful views, unfolded, too, on a soil of the greatest agricultural wealth, and leaving the artist and the husbandman filled equally with admiration. The plough, preparing *plenty*, acts as one of the finest pencils of Nature in producing *beauty*, and will not interfere with any of the attempts of imitative art to represent that beauty. From a single standpoint, you may see graceful undulations of hilly pasturage, rising up from greener meadow land, or from luxuriant corn-fields, and sloping down, through irregular recesses and romantic ravines, to pastoral glens traversed by sparkling streams, and these glens and streams gently winding into the Tweed's lengthy vale, which would also be a broad vale, if it were not for the spacious hollow occupied by the noble river itself that rolls along, its waters often 'lipping' with the smooth margin on one side, but many fathoms beneath the precipitous embankment on the other side; whilst the whole district is not less richly and picturesquely wooded than it is watered,—trees lining and intersecting its levels, sprinkled over its uplands, and crowning its knolls and ridges,—the abundant foliage con-

trasting strikingly with some grey ruins that are near, and with many mansions that are not the less imposing, because, being modern, they cannot be venerable. The view towards the *south*, after stretching over a vast breadth of finely cultivated champaign, is bounded by the cloud-crested Cheviot range, which the shepherds and rural labourers of the Border regularly consult as their weather-glass ; against the *western* sky the peaks of the Eildons rise sharply, and nearer, clearer, stands Hume Castle, once the watch-tower and fortress, now the tourist's observatory, for the magnificent expanse of the Merse ; whilst, less than a mile from Coldstream, is the richly wooded Hirsell, the modern seat of the earls who possessed that ancient castle ; thence, away to the *north*, the Merse spreads over many a height and hollow up to Dunse Law, where a scene and prospect of far inferior grandeur would have been consecrated through association with the Covenanters, in whom Border heroism met with Puritan piety ; and to the *east*, on the Scotch side, are several localities immediately connected with, and named after, the original parish—long called Lennel ; such as the ruins of the old ‘ Kirk,’ standing in the centre of what has all along been the burying-ground, and close to the Tweed, though about a mile and a half from the modern town and church.

The lower and the older portion of Coldstream is sheltered in ‘haugh’ and ‘lea,’ that border on the Tweed, near the point where, after making a majestic curve round the grounds of the Lees, it receives the tributary Leet, and affords such a remarkable view of its course, between precipitous rocks and copse-wood on the one hand, and a wide pebbled channel and level meadows on the other, as could only have been expected in some sequestered bend of its waters ; and the modern streets of the town stretch along terraces that rise to the north, yet command the Cheviots and their ever-changing clouds. If the eye be not attracted by the style of the buildings or the

plan of the streets, it will be more than satisfied by the grace and grandeur diffused over the entire vicinity.

There is also around not a few of the beautiful landscapes of this Border district, the peculiar fascination which tradition and history impart; and their natural charms are enhanced through association with memorable incidents and characters. It is not pretended that *here* are the ruins of palaces, or that kings and courtiers here transacted successive chapters of the old national history. Any point of the Borders was too near to England to be a safe abode for Scottish sovereigns, or a serene seat for Scottish legislation; and the kingdom's rulers and chief affairs were kept aloof from the troubled frontier, and withdrawn to find greater security in Edinburgh, Fife, or Stirling. Border localities, however, were consecrated by something more dignified than the daring and death of a race of freebooters, or a bloody skirmish between Merse-men and Northumbrians. Occasionally the very *ark* of Scotland was rashly carried to the Borders, to be in the thickest of the fight and of the intrigue; and some of the most thrilling episodes in our annals cannot be detached from scenery near Coldstream. The name of *Flodden Field* tells its own tragedy more quickly than does the song, 'The Flowers of the Forest;' and the genius of Sir Walter Scott, in his greatest poem, has breathed life into the dust of the Border, and brought back the two opposing armies, and 'the pride, pomp, and circumstance' of the battle, to the field of Flodden, where the past has been reproduced by him on its own proper stage.¹ Not less really connected with strife and bloodshed than Flodden gathering, was a still older local incident, the meeting at BIRGHAM between the competitors for the Scottish throne and the commissioners of Edward the First; and the imagination of the

¹ The Coldstream ford across the Tweed is now invariably known as 'Marmion's Ford,' and is daily named by many peasants who are ignorant both of the poet and of his hero.

tourist may dilate wonderingly over the singular scene, where no fewer than twelve would-be kings of Scotland advocated their individual claims before the representatives of that English monarch, who assumed to be 'Lord Paramount.' The little village has forgotten the exact locality where stood the building that was honoured by the pretentious company, but the memory of this diplomatic assembly haunts the one row of houses, though it cannot be fixed down to a single point. The garrisons and the occasional reinforcements of WARK and NORHAM CASTLES for centuries kept their Scotch neighbours alert and anxious, and carried fire and sword against life and property, except when dealing with captives that could be ransomed, or with 'stock' that could be profitably removed as booty; and around their ruins, which give to the Tweed and its English banks more boldly romantic features, there are many stirring recollections of a social life and a national era unlike all we can observe. Scarcely a stone stands to tell of the COLDSTREAM ABBEY, where, on account of its proximity to England, the Papal Bull against Henry the Eighth was appointed to be read. The fulminations could not be discharged against the great heretic within his own kingdom: they were therefore directed to explode at his door. A still earlier and more humane service, however, had been rendered by the inmates of this religious retreat,—they had brought the bodies of many of the Scots slain at Flodden, to be laid within the Abbey burying-ground near 'Tweed Green.' On a line with this resting-place of heroes is the 'FORD,' which, from time immemorial down to the opening of the goodly bridge that now spans the river, had been the thoroughfare of shallows between the sister countries. *There*, at one or the other side, travellers of all ranks—even kings with their court or camp attendants, or at the head of large armies—were occasionally detained for days, until the flooded river had abated, while at other times they at once made a dryshod passage. Among the

notable strangers who crossed the Tweed into England, there was one who left strongly traced memories of his brief sojourn in Coldstream ; and of his motives, not only for halting there, but also for proceeding to London. GENERAL MONK, after administering in Scotland the just and beneficent, yet far from popular, government of Oliver Cromwell, conspired to restore the Stuart dynasty ; and, tarrying for a short time at Coldstream, he raised the first recruits of a regiment which has ever since been known as the *Coldstream Guards*. The house in which the General lodged still stands in the Market Place ; and the *Coldstream Guards* have modern laurels, many and bright enough, except to hide the degrading and disastrous service for which they were originally organized. Happy had it been for both divisions of our island if the Restoration had left no darker memories, or if it had been arrested in that Coldstream house ! Yet, of the enterprise which had the first milestone of its progress in the Border town, some of the most enduring associations come into contact with the illustrious Puritans and Covenanters ; and upon the gloomy background of the Stuart tyranny and persecution, the heroism of those martyrs shines forth radiantly, though—in Berwickshire, and over its hills, moors, and morasses—there are but few and faint memorials of the noble sufferers, and there is scarcely a spot that has been consecrated by their blood.

If there were in this Border province but slight traces of the Covenanters, the SECEDERS, however, could be easily recognised from their godly ‘footprints’ and their reforming ‘handiwork ;’ whilst their tent-preaching at sacramental occasions, through long and bright summer Sabbaths, on ‘brae’ sides, or on the bank of a river, or on the ‘meeting-house’ green, filled the air with the ‘joyful sound,’—as for the whole population. Berwickshire was then thinly peopled ; yet the crowds that were drawn and solemnly impressed by those open-air services, gave to the Secession the fostering and the growth which it received else-

where only in large towns ; and it took root and multiplied in single cottages and small hamlets that were scattered over the waste, as well as in the lives of industry. On the Border, the Secession cause was strong and mature ; and indeed, in one sense, it might be said to have had its origin in that locality, where, first at Cornhill, next at Monilaws (both but a very short distance from Coldstream), and afterwards at Whitsome and Chirnside, which were only a few miles farther off, had testified and laboured with remarkable fidelity—the Rev. HENRY ERSKINE, the father of EBENEZER and RALPH ! The two sons must have been greatly indebted, in those contendings that led them beyond the pale of the Kirk, to the stimulating memory of their father in his Border days. He had shown them how to witness, to sacrifice, and to suffer for Christ's truth and a pure conscience ; and the noble nonconformity of the 'ejected' father could not but guide and animate the seceding career of his sons. The father's Border ministry would have linked itself naturally with the many Secession associations that have subsequently spread over the district, even though his son Ralph had not been born at Monilaws, and though neither Ralph nor Ebenezer had ever visited and preached to newly planted seceding congregations in the Merse. *There* the Secession seems to have sprung largely from Henry Erskine's labours, and to be the abundant harvest of what he had sown with weeping.

To the beautiful landscapes around Coldstream—lying under the lights and shadows of so many historical scenes and incidents, and of so many denominational recollections—Adam Thomson had a nature that was open both to be delighted and to be influenced, yet free from such sentimentalism about the past as weakens action for the present, and resolution for the future. He cherished for them no sickly enthusiasm, sprung half from affectation and half from indolence. His appreciation of the charms of his Tweedside home partook of the

soundness and vigour of his mind, and was not the less intense because neither morbid nor fitful. It grew rather than abated ; and in the closing years of his life—whenever he happened to be on a brief sojourn in some other part of the country—he yearned to return to the familiar scenes, and shortened the term of his absence. He had all along been ready to introduce clerical brethren to the places of old renown in his neighbourhood, to Flodden Field, Ford Castle, etc. ; and those friends—whilst they were neither doomed to listen to rhapsodies on the landscape, and displays of historical lore about the incidents, nor challenged to manifest a glowing interest in both—could not fail to see the fascination which such scenes possessed for their guide, and his delight, as a native, in having so much beauty and romance within his reach. In a few graphic words he indicated the various points of interest, and then allowed his companions and himself a quiet space for spontaneously appreciating that interest, and musing upon it. With the whole district and its preserved memories he was as minutely acquainted as with his own garden :

‘ Turn wheresoe’er we would, he was a light
Unfailing : not a hamlet could we pass,
Rarely a house, that did not yield to him
Remembrances ; or from his tongue call forth
Some way-beguiling tale.’—

Wordsworth's Excursion.

He had a fund of Border lore, rich enough to satisfy the poetry and patriotism of Dr. Waugh of London, as well as the historical and antiquarian tastes of Dr. Jamieson of Edinburgh ; nor did the latter, when occasionally, in his frequent visits to Coldstream, disposed for a little angling sport in the Tweed, make himself independent of his host's knowledge of the river, as to where trout and salmon might be waiting for the rod.

Dr. Thomson, in his old age, often described the prominent aspects and circumstances of the district as they were seen in his

early days, and descanted on the striking change which they had undergone, or the fate which some of them had accepted, of disappearing. What he had known as a boy, was perhaps little altered from what had been in existence through several generations ; yet he lived to behold great and sudden transformations, so strangely accelerated is the nineteenth century's rate of 'moving on.' Without generalizing, much less philosophizing, on the new and fearful 'pace' into which our social ongoings are quickened by the age and its spirit of unrest, he fixed upon some local changes which he had himself witnessed, and which vividly represented the operation of the powers and impulses that have been acquired.

From the period of steam travelling on railways that connect the small Border town, not only with the places and points of chief importance in the empire, but with all their sister towns, large or small, and provide the swiftest and most complete intercommunication for all classes of their inhabitants, he looked back to a time when stage-coaches were unknown in the county, and when there were not roads that would have been safe for such vehicles. For the community at large, the 'parliamentary' mode of travelling was *on foot*; a few sat on stuffed sacks in carts, and others took to horseback, several riding 'double,'—the masculine component, however puny-looking, being placed in front, for the management of the horse, and for security to his companion, and the feminine, often decidedly Amazonian, clinging to his waist, though far more likely to support him in his seat, or drag him out and off ; but all these classes kept pretty closely to the *pedestrian* rate of speed, and the 'express' was reserved for the squire or the nobleman who had his own carriage. The virtue of remaining much at home was then rather a necessity, from the want of ways and means for excursiōing ; still, the vast majority, who had never been beyond their parish, except at fair or sacrament, were neither discontented nor oppressed by *ennui*. They were

strangers to moods of mental vacancy, and to indolent habits ; nor had they been shut up into Chinese barbarism and conceit. They had around them, for study, sympathy, and intercourse, a human world as large, and of as inexhaustible interest, as any modern philosopher, who spends half of his time in rushing across all lands and seas, and in visiting all the varieties of his race, can find or turn to proper account. The press did not then gather for them fresh reports of what was happening all over the earth, for only a few persons among them read the newspapers ; and the newspapers of that day, though high-priced, contained merely a little intelligence of what had been done weeks before in two or three principal cities of the kingdom, and almost nothing of what had been done for years in the great world beyond. At present, a villager, confined to his arm-chair, can daily, through his penny paper, survey all that is going on at home and abroad ; but, seventy years ago, he would have been without his paper, or even if he had chanced to lay hold of one, he would have seen through it almost as little of the world and its affairs as if he had looked up his chimney. Yet, without travelling, and without its modern substitute, the newspaper, the Border community of that period managed not only to keep awake, but to preserve their intellectual and moral, their emotional and spiritual, nature in vigorous and refined activity. They ‘dwelt with their own people,’ and seldom saw a stranger ; they read few books, and they thought and conversed about few subjects ; yet somehow they did not contract tendencies to dulness, sloth, or boorishness, far less did they sink into animalism. Neighbours met each other more frequently, and their closer intercourse produced greater mutual improvement. The topics of talk were limited, but they were more fully examined and more thoroughly discussed, and thus gave better nurture and discipline to the mind, than in our day, when there is a butterfly-like fluttering over all subjects, and a profitable fixing

upon few or none. Sermons were not dismissed with a simple verdict at the church door ; but, apart from the minute criticism which the most conceited, and probably the most incompetent, of the flock, expended upon them, they formed general themes for week-day colloquy. The many days of public worship at sacramental occasions, and the lengthy services that were then conducted by groups of neighbouring ministers, were not felt to be tedious—they were welcomed and listened to with peculiar animation and zest ; and though a boy of that era could not pretend to say what and how lasting was their influence upon the character and conduct of the eager audiences, yet he did see that they led to ample discussion, which was often renewed for weeks, and that those who took part in it, or simply heard it, appeared to be deeply interested, and not a little profited. There is one reminiscence which indicates that the range of conversation, though then extremely narrow, was far from barren ; *the weather*, as a topic, was in all circles and seasons much less frequently introduced, and more quickly dismissed, than at present, and far less reliance was put upon it, as helping either to begin or to continue a dialogue. There was then fair and foul, hot and cold, cloudy and sunny, calm and stormy weather, perhaps in greater degree and in swifter interchange ; but the variations were not needed as general escapes from, or preventives against, awkward silence, and the weather-prosers were regarded as not less ludicrous than if they had entered the room and sat down together, each with his umbrella unfurled above his head and shoulders ! The men of our day, however, who judge it ‘idle’ to hear a sermon, and still more idle to talk about it, except with sneers, will, in spite of *their* vast and crowded range of subjects for conversation, never scruple to bring in any kind of weather before any company, lest they should become speechless.

Nor did the Border community lack seasons of recreation and resources for amusement. The modern representation

that—through the grim alliance of presbytery and penury, involving too much of ‘carritch’ and too little of ‘pairritch’—social life was morose and gloomy, is utterly false; for in all classes, characters, and ages, fun and sport broke forth irrepressibly, and a still wilder excitement was too often sought in dangerous or mischievous adventures. There were customs, now obsolete, which drew almost the whole population into ‘merry-making;’ but this was prevented from becoming uproarious, by the presence of seniors and superiors. There was hilarity in the house, and out-of-doors athletic games were engaged in, with the keenest Border enthusiasm, not only by juveniles, but by the full-grown and middle-aged. Nearly all the male inhabitants of village or town would turn out to have such a football match as ‘merry England’ never knew; and the players—divided into the ‘married’ and the ‘unmarried’—kicked on until the ball was not only ‘without form,’ but ‘void.’ Winter, which is now a season peculiarly trying to the sons and daughters of toil, was generally a period of cheerfulness, distinguished by not a few holidays of the most animated gaiety; and in harvest, the yoke of labour pressed severely, yet seemed to be unfelt by the light-hearted reapers, whose songs and laughter in the field are being exchanged for the dull grinding and creaking of the wheels of reaping machines.

Local events attracted far more notice than now. ‘Births, marriages, and deaths’ might not be announced in journals as ‘news’ for the world, yet they were much more ceremonially treated in the district. The rejoicings at a marriage were not confined to one or two families, but were shared in by the public, though it might have been thought that at *Coldstream*, so notorious for its ‘irregular matches’—concluded in a moment by the ‘blacksmith priest’—there would have been but little interest taken in such an affair, the many low *travesties* of the ceremony tending to injure its occasional performance in a regular way; and at a funeral, all the neighbours of the

deceased made an effort to attend. The churchyard was about a mile and a half from Coldstream; yet few, if any, accompanied the procession for only a part of the distance—they went on until they reached the grave's mouth; nor did they return before the sod was stretched and smoothed over the new mound; when, simultaneously, they moved their heads in testimony that all due respect had been paid to the 'poor inhabitant below.' We have heard of one Border sexton, who, whenever the gathering around him was smaller than usual, felt it to be a personal affront to himself, and was as disappointed as a minister could be with an occasionally half empty church.

The generation into which Adam Thomson was born, closely resembled its slow and quiet predecessors; but great changes were at hand,—the spirit of unrest had been evoked in France, and the Revolution was there making its startling progress. This, however, was only a subject for serious talk among the very few politicians who were scattered over the Border; and here, at this time, there was no anxiety about, no expectation of, the long and terrible war which was on the eve of breaking out between Britain and France. The boys of Coldstream played keenly at *soldiering*, but wholly in accordance with their old traditions; and their enemies were not the French, who had to cross the Channel, but the ENGLISH, who had merely to rush over the Tweed. Adam Thomson remembered vividly how he and other juveniles had often fought against imaginary *Edwards* and *Surreys*, and gained many a *Bannockburn* without meeting with a single *Flodden*; but the chivalry of France never entered the schoolboys' battle-field. The mimic guardians of the Border knew nothing of an obscure youth in France, who, only three or four winters before, when the playground of his school was covered with an unusual depth of snow, had contrived that entrenchments, raised out of snow, should be assailed and defended by him and his little companions, in

a sham siege which lasted fifteen days, but who was destined to be, as a conqueror, equal either to Alexander the Great or to Julius Cæsar; and, by his stupendous military genius, to test to the uttermost the courage and resources of our country, and to become the idol of France and the terror of Europe!

The coming changes in the district began with new facilities for locomotion; and turnpikes, along with stage-coaches and post-chaises, were introduced, giving special enlivenment and bustle to Coldstream. The whole neighbourhood had formerly worn much of the appearance of an unenclosed plain, large and irregular sections of which were covered with 'blossomed furze, unprofitably gay;' but the formation of a highway marked the first inroads of that cultivation which soon utilized every spot, and produced fields not less fertile than beautiful. Dr. Thomson, when taking, in old age, his daily drive a few miles out of Coldstream, pointed to a secluded and narrow lane, adding—that he remembered well of having, more than seventy years before, when he was a little boy, travelled along it, with his mother sitting behind him, on horseback; and that then there was nothing but a broken continuation of such by-ways over the country. They were impassable by any kind of vehicle that could have carried men or merchandise. *Coals*, as Dr. Thomson remembered, were brought, to all that used them, in sacks slung on the backs of ponies or donkeys; and these beasts of burden wore shoes on their *fore-feet alone*. Economy, and the hilly paths over which they travelled, may explain why they were merely half 'shod,' and why the two 'iron-clad' feet were the front ones, that chiefly felt the strain of climbing. But if, at that time, horses were lightly burdened with shoes, *men* had their feet encased in iron, the toes and heels of their shoes being strongly plated, and the soles being covered with rows of large 'tackets,' which long kept the leather at a safe distance from the stony ground. We cannot wonder that boys,

after carrying such a weight at their feet during the winter and spring, were glad to throw it off whenever summer came, and to run about in 'bare-footed' freedom!

As soon as a turnpike was made, loads of coal began to be taken in carts; and these were still more extensively employed by farmers in bringing lime and manure to their soil, and in sending their grain to mill and market. Along the new roads, great improvements in the Merse agriculture marched rapidly. Carriers' carts were started to go weekly from various towns to Edinburgh; and they were available not only for goods, but for women and children, as occasional passengers. Coaches between the northern capital and London ran through the Border town, exciting astonishment in old as well as young along the route, that there should be daily about a dozen strangers whose business or inclination took them on such a long and unknown journey, for which, too, they needed a 'guard,' and that the vehicle should never rattle past with only the 'whip' and the 'horn!' It came, however, soon to be understood that this was a safer and more expeditious mode of travelling than on horseback, or in a crazy 'smack' from Berwick.¹ By and by a single coach gave too scanty accommodation; and shortly before the introduction of a Border railway, the route had much of the excitement of a *circus*, from the rivalry, and, in some cases, the racing, of *Highflyers*, *Red Rovers*, *Quicksilvers*, and *Eclipses*; for in the towns and villages through which they passed, they had each a large crowd of partisans ready to shout triumphantly whenever the favourite

¹ The Rev. John Riddoch, for many years minister of the Secession congregation in Coldstream, and the immediate predecessor of the subject of this memoir, once, before the coach era, bravely broke through the dissuasives and discouragements that surrounded the proposal of a visit to London, and on horseback he accomplished the journey up in three weeks exactly. His return would occupy the same time. He might not ride a 'John Gilpin' race, but he believed that he travelled both steadily and rapidly; yet his successor has often gone to and returned from London in far fewer *hours* than he took *days*.

came in *first*, especially if it came in with a full load of passengers. Other vehicles—in as great a variety of form and size, and as great a contrast of splendour with meanness, as prevailed among the houses on each side of the road, and in the street, and horsed and driven in so many different styles—enlivened the highway, and gave business and bustle to its inns. But the incessant rolling of vehicles along that thoroughfare has ceased, and all the stir has been diverted to the monopolizing railway. The *spinning*-wheels, too, which formerly in almost every Border habitation made cheerful music in preparing the family linen, were stopped about the same time, through the same agency of steam-driven machinery.

These, and many other changes, which broke up the stillness and sameness of social life around his early days, Dr. Thomson had closely observed; and in his old age he often contrasted the characteristics of the present with those of the past—as traced upon personal recollections of his native district.

We must, however, leave this topic of change and progress, all around the cherished home of his long life, to note some particulars of his parentage, and to enter upon the narrative of his young days.

His father and mother were marked by genuine piety; and this was a distinction more important, both to themselves and to their descendants, than rank or wealth. The father was a merchant in Coldstream, but had been born in a rural part of the parish, where his ancestors for many generations had been farmers. The mother, whose maiden name was Esther Johnston, was also descended from a long line of Berwickshire farmers. Her father was tenant of a farm and mill at Hutton Hall—a singularly beautiful and romantic place beside the Whitadder, where the subject of our memoir, when a boy, delighted, during school vacations, to visit his grandfather. In those grave and quiet ‘tillers of the soil,’ the old Border energy and love of adventure were not extinct, though peaceably

directed and ruled. As a slight indication of the spirit of enterprise latent in both parental 'stocks,' we may mention that Adam Thomson's *father* had three sisters, each of whom was mother of a son that rose to the highest municipal honours of the city in which he was settled, whilst the three cities were separated far from each other, as well as from the common Border home. The coincidence was all the more striking, from the three sons holding their posts of dignity at nearly the same time. One was Sir Peter Laurie, Lord Mayor of London ; another was Mr. Mills, Lord Provost of Glasgow ; and the third was Mr. Laidlaw, the chief magistrate of New York. The three cousins from Tweedside must have been quite as adventurous as lucky, having in them the 'Border blood,' for pursuing and acquiring what they could not find at home ! Nor was the *maternal* line undistinguished ; for Adam Thomson's *mother* had a brother whose two sons attained to high rank in the British army. We have no wish to adduce these collateral facts as tending to flash a little glory upon the obscurity of the family history ; nor do we care to have this glory glancing angularly upon the 'full cousin.' Our design has been simply to point to a striking coincidence, illustrative of the energy and enterprise of those Borderers with whom the subject of this memoir was doubly akin.

In a family of ten children—four sons and six daughters—Adam Thomson was the second-born, the first having been his brother Peter, who died in early manhood, yet not before he had given ample proof of his rare gifts and graces for the pastoral office, and been blessed with many 'seals to his ministry.' This brother, who was Adam's senior by about fifteen months, was in childhood 'frequently attacked with diseases of the most dangerous kind ; and his parents dreaded that he would never arrive at the years of manhood. In this, however, their fears were happily disappointed. The Head of the Church had intended to "give him a place and a name in

his house ;" and He mingled a divine blessing with the means which were employed to preserve and invigorate his tender and shattered frame.'¹

From a very early age, Peter looked forward to the ministerial office ; the tenderness of his health, perhaps, doing something to excite and foster that desire, which yet 'grew with his growth, strengthened with his strength,' and became a fixed resolution as soon as his freedom from oft-recurring sickness was confirmed. His eagerness for, and his success in, acquiring the rudiments of a liberal education, were in keeping with his ambition.

His brother Adam was the reverse of a feeble or sickly child : he had a sound, compact, and well-knit frame, that was full of energy, vivacity, and motion ; and the hours for sleep imposed the only confinement to which he was subjected, and dispelled all the languor which he felt. So completely was he engrossed with the endless and ever-new delights of the infantile term, that any choice of what should be his occupation as a man, was not only postponed, but even unthought of. Infancy is by far the briefest term belonging to average human life ; yet, when it is healthy and happy, it is so dilated with a myriad of sensations, fancies, dreams, and experiences, that it seems to stretch out immeasurably, and to become longer than all the other terms put together. It was in such an infancy and its unbounded sphere of fascination that Adam Thomson rejoiced ; and he never broke from its charmed circle to form a wish, far less a purpose, as to his long future profession. The fact that 'when he was a child, he spoke, felt, and thought like a child,' favours the expectation that, on his becoming a man, he would be man-like. Instead of sitting down in a corner of the house or garden to muse and resolve upon the far distant scenes and engagements of his manhood, he kept incessantly

¹ *Memoir of the Rev. Peter Thomson, late Minister of the Scotch Church, Leeds.* By Adam Thomson, minister in Coldstream. 1807.

stirring in indoor and outdoor games with sprightliness and zest,—his head never tired of any novelty in the round of play, and his hands and feet always alert to undertake it ; yet, then, in the midst of all his glee, he showed himself invariably amiable and unselfish—not less ready to give than to receive a fellowship in every amusement.

In the case of not a few, the *alphabet* is the ‘bridge of sighs’ between merry childhood and more anxious youth ; and the schoolmaster brings the first trials and alarms of life, and compels many of his pupils to enter the hard ‘work-day’ world ! To others, however, learning is not only congenial and easy as play, but is attended with higher delights, since it involves the exercise of nobler powers ; and the most potent enchantment for childhood is supplied by books. The Thomsons belonged to the class that thirsted for knowledge, and regarded their duty of acquiring it as a genuine pleasure. According to his brother’s testimony, Peter could in his fifth year read English fluently, and two years later he was busy with the rudiments of Latin ; and Adam would be no farther in the rear of this advance than his being fifteen months younger justified. They received their education at the parish school of Coldstream, which had then for its teacher their own uncle, Mr. M’Lean, who was afterwards minister of the neighbouring parish of Fogo—serving, in each of these spheres, more than a generation. We do not know what influence over, or popularity with, his Fogo parishioners Mr. M’Lean possessed as a minister : we rather fear that, in the pulpit, he was far from lively, in spite of repeated pinches of snuff, and that, out of the pulpit, he was vexingly plain-spoken—thrusting his sharp words through all the thickness of the parochial skin in Fogo, so as to reach rustic folly and malice, ignorance and vice. But as a teacher he was greatly esteemed, even revered, by his diligent pupils, and by none more than by his nephews, though he was not the man to show them any favouritism in the way of re-

laxing the severity of his discipline, or of giving either more attention or more applause to their lessons, on the ground of their relationship. In the school, and as long as they were pupils, he never knew them as nephews; nor did they see in him a good-natured and indulgent uncle, but an impartially exacting master, whose praise would be bestowed only in so far as it had been earned by their scholarship. Long afterwards, when the teacher and his pupil Adam were both clergymen, frequently interchanging hospitalities, and treating each other as friends and kinsmen, the junior could not always, in the presence of the senior, get quit of his former impressions of 'awe;' and often in his dreams he renewed his old familiarity with the stern face, the imperative voice, and, perhaps, the not unready rod, of the schoolmaster! Mr. M'Lean was an excellent classical scholar, but his humour and his thorough acquaintance with the world kept him from being a pedant; and to those of his pupils who manifested a strong desire and a steady purpose to overcome the difficulties in the way of reading ancient literature, he gave his best care and encouragement. He helped and guided the willing; but the indifferent were too much left to themselves, and to the prophecy which he did not spare—that they would be 'hewers of wood and drawers of water.' Idle and stupid boys had neither whip nor spur applied to make them advance, though occasionally a jest, sneer, or taunt was aimed at them, to render them ludicrous or contemptible to their companions, and to cause themselves to smart with shame. A few words of his peculiar bantering were far from pleasant to those for whom he meant them; and as generally some neighbour *dunces* were the first to smile or laugh at the unfortunates under the torture, he quickly discovered and marred *their* enjoyment, by a larger dose of similar ridicule for themselves. A college professor would have envied his effective method of dealing with big 'boobies.' He abounded in what is called 'dry humour'—a

quality which is more easily understood than defined. He was a monopolist of situations that gave him great opportunities for curious and grotesque observation: he was session-clerk, heritors' clerk, land-surveyor, and 'town bailie,' as well as parish schoolmaster; and his budget of select recollections of what he in all these offices had seen, was richly comic. Such a 'factotum' as he, and possessed of his sagacity, shrewdness, and tact, could not fail to be a humorous chronicler of the Border town and parish. There was at that time no lawyer in Coldstream; but the 'town bailie' was the universal counsellor and umpire; and not a day passed without the appearance of some neighbours before him, to get either his advice in a difficulty, or his decision in a dispute. He ruled the town as well as the school; or that, at least, he thoroughly knew and could graphically describe both, was proved by the sketches with which he enlivened many a genial group of friends.

He was, as became him in several of his offices, a zealous champion of the Kirk, and a stout opponent of Seceders; yet in the school he showed no partiality for children belonging to the former; nor in social life did his humour keep its blunt side turned to the ludicrous episodes of the Kirk, and reserve all its keenness of edge for the pretended follies of the 'meeting-house.' We may offer an illustration, though it is in advance of the present stage of our narrative. Some years after his nephew Adam had been ordained minister of the Secession congregation in Coldstream, and before Mr. M'Lean had been settled in Fogo, the well-known Dr. Waugh of London—then preaching over Scotland in aid of the London Missionary Society and its funds—came to Coldstream, and occupied Mr. Thomson's pulpit on the Sabbath. The doctor never failed in his native Berwickshire, and when delivering one of his carefully prepared discourses on missions, to put forth a powerful and fervid eloquence, and to reach both the hearts and the purses of an audience. On that occasion the congregation responded to

his plea with the largest collection they had ever made—
£33, 10s. Next forenoon, as Mr. Thomson and the doctor were walking along the street, they were met by Mr. M'Lean; and he was quickly informed of the handsome sum which the Seceders had given to the cause of missions. 'And our collection,' replied the Kirk session-clerk, as a merry twinkle gleamed in his eye, 'was exactly *fourpence halfpenny*, after paying the bellman!' Of course, the Kirk hearers had known that 'the poor' and the parish minister they 'had always with them;' whereas, to their seceding neighbours, Dr. Waugh and the cause of missions came only occasionally.

Adam Thomson attended closely to his lessons, under Mr. M'Lean's care, yet found ample leisure, and no lack of disposition and energy, to figure, not only in the playground of the school, but in the larger and more irregular sphere of amusement which he and his playmates found, after school hours, within and around the town, and on the banks of the Tweed. When struggling with the difficulties of the Latin grammar, he was neither compelled nor inclined to forego his recreations, but was free and eager to join his companions in sport or rambling. His teacher had the wisdom—rather rare at that period—to prescribe a lesson of only a few lines, to be thoroughly mastered and long remembered distinctly, instead of setting them so many pages which, though poring over them until bed-time, they would imperfectly learn, and soon forget; and this enabled the juvenile 'Roman' to take a strengthening and exhilarating share in the boyish diversions and games of the Border district.

In his eighth year, however, he was suddenly visited with a serious illness, which interrupted, for a long time, his attention both to sport and to study. A swelling—supposed to have been the result of an accident—began to appear in his left knee; and for long it only became worse, under the treatment which the doctors gave it, whilst his health was not only im-

paired, but shattered. Various experiments were resorted to, that caused no little pain to the patient, without doing him any good. The limb was at length pronounced incurable, and amputation was strongly recommended, with the hope of saving his life, which was now seen to be in a dangerous crisis. The boy himself did not shrink from the surgeon's knife, which then, and long afterwards, down to the blessed introduction of chloroform, appalled so many brave hearts, and moved not a few to submit to death rather than to seek an escape through the 'cruel mercies' of such a deliverer: he kept pressing for its immediate application, with all a child's eagerness for some tempting novelty, though he had not been told that it was proposed as the desperate and only alternative of a fatal issue! His mother, however, strenuously opposed this extreme remedy, and clung to a fluctuating faith that he might be brought back from the gates of death without the loss of limb. She had frequent moods of predominant anxiety and alarm; and in these she feared that the shock which amputation must give to the enfeebled system would prove fatal. In a little, she was compelled to resign her hopes of his recovery, as he was obviously sinking. His grave-clothes were prepared, and she waited in agony for the moment when they would be required. It was in Scotland then considered to be as unnatural and improper that the last dress should not be 'ready' for the moment of death, as that the first dress should not be ready for the moment of birth. But, contrary to expectation, the boy rallied somewhat; and this improvement and his subsequent recovery his parents traced to the Great Disposer, and, under Him, to the skill of a man long famous on the Borders. This was 'Campbell of Dunse,' whom all the provincial doctors professed to despise as a 'quack,' but who was believed by the public at large to be possessed of wonderful 'gifts of healing,' which had been acquired—nobody knew where—certainly, as everybody knew, not at college! He had

an abrupt, blunt, and churlish address, from which even Abernethy might have borrowed; but his deeds, it was alleged, spoke for him. He was reported to have at once, and easily, succeeded in a vast variety of cases which had been given up as hopeless by many 'orthodox' representatives of the 'faculty,' after long and, to the patients, rather costly trials. The practitioners who disowned him, said that he was without a smattering of anatomy, and scarcely knew a bone from a muscle; yet somehow he summarily and satisfactorily, according to general belief, dealt with such difficult fractures and dislocations of bones, and swellings, as had failed in their own hands; and if it was a fact that from themselves crowds went uncured to him, and were then quickly sent home in a fair way of recovery, whilst few, if any, went uncured from him to them, there could be little wonder at comparisons being freely made. There are, doubtless, 'quacks' in the medical profession; but, after making great deductions from the 'Campbell' reputation, on the ground both of the public's liability to be gulled, and of the public's tendency to exaggerate; and after adding to those deductions a large number of such cures as might have been begun by other doctors, or as might have been begun and completed without any doctor at all, still there remained a remarkable amount of skilful practice to be placed to Campbell's account; nor did it much matter to patients and their friends whether so many cures were effected by a 'quack,' or by a regular doctor.

As soon as Adam Thomson could be safely removed, he was taken to Dunse, to be more immediately under Dr. Campbell's care; and ere long his restoration to health and to activity had so far advanced that he could walk out on crutches. These helps he continued to use, and with them he could, either in walking or in running, outstrip the swiftest of his companions; until, in the course of a few years, he laid them aside, having regained his former vigour of constitution, and with no other

trace of his illness than a stiff knee-joint, which caused a slight halt and a slower step in his walking, but never obstructed his energy, or narrowed his sphere of action.

Before closing the interval of his protracted absence from school, he paid a visit to his maternal grandfather at Hutton Hall Mill; and there he experienced such a providential escape as he afterwards, even in the last years of his life, often mentioned with emphatic gratitude, though it was merely the first in a long list of equally remarkable deliverances from imminent danger, that had been granted. One day, instead of accompanying his grandfather in a stroll over the farm, he chose to try a little fishing sport in the Whitadder, which flowed immediately beneath the undulating height on which the house stood. The distance being only a few yards, and his rod being equivalent to a staff, the crutches would be left behind. He stationed himself on what is in the district called an 'anna'—a little island formed by the Whitadder on the one side and by the mill-dam on the other—and there kept plying his rod. By and by he began to feel hungry; and 'setting' his rod, *that is*, sticking the butt end into the ground, and leaving the line and hook dangling in the water, to fish for him in his absence, he went to the house to get a 'piece' from his grandmother. On his return, he found that during the short time he had been away, the river had been swollen into a rapid and raging flood, which covered the island. His rod had been swept away; and as easily and certainly would he, too, have been swept away, if he had been upon the little island when the flood, without giving a warning, or allowing a moment for his retreat to the bank, descended in fury with its accumulated waters. His hunger had, at the very 'nick of time,' withdrawn him from the approaching but invisible and unannounced danger. He was wont to add, after telling of this narrow escape: 'I was so stupid at the time, that instead of being duly impressed with the mercy of God in

preserving me, I was only sorry for the loss of my *gad* (fishing-rod).' In the many visits, however, which he subsequently made to the farm, he never saw the little island in the Whitadder, without gratefully remembering how his life had been preserved, and dedicating it anew to the service of his Protector.

On returning to his father's house at Coldstream, he resumed his attendance at school, but did not immediately go on with his Latin studies. Perhaps, when he saw what progress his brother Peter had made, and how far he himself, in consequence of his protracted illness, had been left behind, he may have been led to abandon the idea of acquiring qualifications for one of the learned professions. Peter was fluently translating Ovid and Virgil, Sallust and Livy, and, having far advanced through the Greek grammar, was about to enter college; but his own lessons would still have been in the Latin rudiments. The comparison was discouraging. He had probably begun Latin for no other reason than that his elder brother had a year before entered upon its study; but when he now found the distance between them *tripled*, he paused in the classical race. The other branches of learning cost him no particular effort, but allowed him ample leisure for the most varied exercise.

It happened, however, that by the concurrence of several circumstances through which deep and abiding religious impressions were conveyed to his mind, he was, after a brief interval, induced to form the purpose of following his brother's example, in seeking qualifications for the ministerial office, as the future occupation of his life. Though his childhood had been stirring, buoyant, and joyous, it would be wrong to infer that these are marks of such a constitutional levity as offers more resistance to evangelical truth than is found in a dull temperament, or in sedate habits. The phlegmatic youth is not by a hairsbreadth nearer the kingdom of God than his sprightly neighbour. The long term of his illness would not be allowed by Adam

Thomson's pious parents to pass, without strenuous and repeated endeavours to instruct and interest him in the essence of the gospel ; nor can we doubt that the result would be in a degree salutary. The death of two brothers and a sister, all removed at different stages of infancy about this time, would tend, not only to deepen his old impressions, and to make him more susceptible of new ones, but also to render his parents more intensely anxious that he and the other surviving members of the family circle should be early 'trained in the way in which they should go.' In Adam's nature, the domestic affections were peculiarly quick, tender, and enduring ; and keen must have been his grief at the snapping of the brotherly tie to those three infants, though they had been so young that they could only smile in return for his salutation, or in recognition of his fondling. The immovable smile which the departing spirit had left upon each of the little faces, and which resembled no other expression ever before seen there, either in sleeping or in waking moments, was long as distinctly before him as when he took his farewell gaze ; and the sadness of his heart was fitted to make him wiser and more thoughtful. To his parents the threefold bereavement was severely afflictive, though they had a triumphant assurance that it was emphatically 'well' with the departed, whose premature death was only their early birth into a saint's blessed immortality, and a translation to heaven, more privileged, though far less exceptional, than was Enoch's or Elijah's ; for whilst the prophet and the patriarch had to bear the heat and burden, and to struggle with the difficulties and dangers, of the long wilderness way, and were then merely exempted from the sharp yet brief agony of DYING, those infants were destined to escape from the innumerable and protracted 'tribulations' of LIVING, and to enter glory without the fearful 'middle passage' through childhood, youth, manhood, and old age, and their succession of snares, sorrows, and perils ! Still, though death was to these

infants themselves a blessed event, it was to the parents a loss to be mourned over with an anguish as deep as was their tenderness towards the helpless and artless little ones. It also admonished them to labour, watch, and pray with new energy for the godly upbringing of their surviving children. They had the satisfaction of knowing that their eldest son, who had lately, at the age of fourteen, commenced a college course of education at Edinburgh, was under the power of the 'truth as it is in Jesus,' and that, whilst aspiring to the ministerial office, he not only sought due preparation for its hard work, but showed a character and deportment of piety accordant with his prospects; and for the second-born, their chief concern was that, like his brother, he should early become a disciple of the Lord Jesus, and grow and labour constantly as a Christian, whatever occupation he might be designed to follow. The mother had got quit of her painful anxiety about Adam's health, and of her protracted watching over his physical prostration; but she was now under a much heavier oppression of care for his spiritual condition. She may have been visited by some premonitions of the fact that her own days were already numbered, though she had merely passed the noon of life; and those forebodings must have added greater urgency to her intercessions, and new pathos to her counsels and appeals. There were two books which she highly prized, for their clear and solemn method of pleading with the reader to attend to the duty of self-examination as to his religious state—Guthrie's *Trial of a Saving Interest in Christ*, and Flavel's *A Saint indeed*; and these she persuaded Adam to read and ponder earnestly. He derived from them, as he often acknowledged down to the close of his life, a new and abiding seriousness of view and resolution; and on any re-perusal of their pages, the searchings of conscience, and the solemn impressions upon his heart and understanding, which attended his first acquaintance with them, were recalled—some of the passages continuing to

stand forth distinctly, as having stirred his youthful nature to its depths. At that time there were none of the religious tales which the press now showers around for the Sunday edification of juveniles in every Christian family. The department of literature, now densely filled with innumerable volumes in which the young are sought to be captivated by fiction, in order that they may be converted to or confirmed in Christianity, was formerly a total blank. If this fast growing library were to disappear from before the eyes of the immense multitude of boys and girls, young men and maidens, who so diligently use it each Sabbath, and if in the empty space the volumes of Guthrie and Flavel were to be substituted, how great would be the consternation at this dire famine in Sunday dainties for the youthful mind ! That the myriads of those religious tales are widely read, must be held to be a proof that they give pleasure, but is far from being conclusive as to whether this pleasure often or at all involves high spiritual benefit. Seventy years ago, there were no religious works specially prepared for the young, except Catechisms ; and these far from fascinating manuals were made rather repulsive by the fact, that they must not only be read, but committed to memory with strictest accuracy : nor did the pulpit occasionally address a juvenile audience in sermons peculiarly adapted to their comprehension and interest, but they were left to pick out a few crumbs from what was meant to be the 'portion' of adults. Thus pulpit and press gave to the young the very same Christian 'nurture and admonition' which were provided for the mature ; and Adam Thomson's experience was, that they were of mestimable value. The two books which we have mentioned as selected by his mother, had a potent and lasting influence for good.

He was also under deep obligations, for many solemn views and impressions of divine truth at this period, to the ordinance of preaching. In the Secession congregation to which the family belonged, and of which his father was an elder, he

listened eagerly and with conscious profit to the able and faithful, yet far from eloquent, discourses of Mr. Riddoch, whom he always described as a sound theologian, a judicious expositor of Scripture, an earnest preacher of the cross, and a diligent pastor. He never failed to allude reverently and gratefully to his minister as putting forth not a little of the influence which guided him into and along the right way; for though Mr. Riddoch lacked the commanding oratory which gives to the pulpit a strong fascination for the young, and stirs their ambition into purposes or dreams of a future rivalry on their part as preachers, yet he possessed the power of arresting and fixing their volatile minds in an earnest mood to consider the claims of Christ upon their trust and obedience; and sometimes he, with God's blessing, induced them to take and wear Christ's yoke.

Not a few, too, of the ministerial brethren who officiated at Coldstream along with Mr. Riddoch in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, were men deservedly famous over a wide district for preaching gifts; and our young hearer attended eagerly to their discourses, and was even then keenly observant of their respective peculiarities. Frequent and prominent among those assistants was *Mr. Davidson of Dunse*—a Nathanael for apparent and real guilelessness, full of primitive simplicity, amiability, and piety, and, when out of the pulpit, marked by lamb-like gentleness and meekness—as if he were defenceless as well as patient under any wrong-doing,—yet, in the pulpit, bold and aggressive as a lion; and not only clothed with the ‘terrors of the Lord’ against the impenitent and reprobate, but armed with a ready and grotesque humour against whatever was unseemly or inconsistent in the deportment of any of his people in the church. Those hearers who either stepped into their pews after he had begun the service, or fell asleep during its progress, were sure to be dealt with in a way which both they and their neighbours would remem-

ber—his rebuke never failing to attach to them some exquisitely ludicrous associations. Sleeping in church was at that time a prevalent impropriety. Not a few of the hearers had performed a long journey in walking from their place of residence to that of worship, and the prayers and sermons were then of very considerable length, even those which had no other soporific quality ; and the rest, which the wearied limbs of those pilgrims were enjoying, imperceptibly, and without any intentional composing of head and arms on the book-board, passed into slumber. There they sat before the preacher, nodding more punctually than intelligently, and snoring with no restraint, apology, or disguise, yet intimating to him, with a plainness and emphasis which no articulation could improve, that *he spoke to the deaf*, though they had ‘ears to hear.’ To resist the languor stealing over them, some had changed their posture, and stood erect, occasionally to the dismay of an Edinburgh clergyman, who misinterpreted this device against the treacherous invasion of sleep, and imagined that the four or five persons who almost simultaneously had sprung to their feet in different parts of the church, were about to protest or to argue against his doctrine ; yet even those perpendicular hearers, who hoped to strengthen their resistance by firmly placing their back against the pillars that supported the gallery, were generally overcome, and they stood wavering and swaying like the tower of Pisa—their deflection all the more apparent from the perfect steadiness of those associated pillars. Mr. Davidson’s methods of awaking and shaming church sleepers were endlessly varied ; and in none of them was he more gentle than the ‘shipmaster,’ who aroused Jonah with a voice more boisterous than the storm. By a few words, he made them ‘laughing-stocks’ to the congregation and to themselves. Reliable tradition has preserved many of those humorous rebukes ; and these differ from each other, as well as from the few stereotyped sarcasms which other preachers

have employed. He never resorted to the awful device of launching against the offenders the declaration that 'there is no sleeping in hell!' nor did he ever shriek out, 'Fire! fire!' and then, changing his tone, as the culprits awoke in a startled fashion, remark for their benefit, 'There is fire in hell for all the careless!' He shrunk from such menaces of eternal punishment as profanely burlesque. A third class of offenders, formerly numerous in country congregations, consisted of those hearers who, in the progress of a discourse, either kept listlessly turning over the pages of their Bibles, or proceeded to read for minutes at some particular passages, though these had no reference to the subject under illustration. Mr. Davidson regarded those idle readers in church as much more blameworthy than their sleeping neighbours; the latter unwarily and unconsciously lapsed into deafness, but the former wilfully crammed their ears—and with pages of the Bible too—that they might not hear the preacher! He scornfully treated the practice as indicative, not of a studious, but of a vacant mind, and as a sure proof that those who followed it, instead of being diligent 'searchers' of the Scriptures, habitually neglected them, and never, when out of church, looked into the sacred volume. He would sometimes ask a stupid-looking farm-servant, who with one hand was supporting his head, and with the other was turning over the pages of his Bible, if these were not lying upside down. At other times he would hint, with a severe expression of face, that the readers were poring over certain historical passages in the Old Testament, and that they were using the lights of terrible beacons to kindle their own unhallowed imaginations and passions,—thus tempting themselves to deadly sin by the pure word of God! Mr. Davidson, however, must not be classed with those preachers who introduced jesting freely, and whose most characteristic sermons were side-splitting rather than heart-piercing. Of his faculty for humour, he displayed, in discoursing, neither the

use nor the abuse ; he reserved it entirely for those *extempore* rebukes which were spoken 'aside' from his sermons, and were preserved in the memory of hearers as detached episodes, without confusing or weakening the impressions of his preaching. This, indeed, was always richly evangelical, and in a strain of thought and sentiment the most solemn and tender, whilst his fervid delivery often passed into a kind of chanting, which, though perfectly artless, united the sweetness of music to the force of oratory. His discourses were of a meditative rather than a discussional or descriptive cast ; and his deep musings on the essential truth about Christ as the Redeemer, and about man as a sinner, brought him close to the main wants, sympathies, and yearnings in the souls of his hearers, and established a direct communication between these and the special views of the gospel which they needed. Peter Thomson recorded, in his student's note-book—side by side with many golden passages selected in the course of his reading—some fine specimens of those meditations, and thus placed the Secession minister of Dunse in the company of the noblest divines, philosophers, poets, and historians ; nor was his brother Adam less eager to appreciate and remember the sayings of Mr. Davidson.

Another frequent assistant at Coldstream, though of widely different peculiarities, was the 'Rev. Robert Hall, A.M., Kelso,' as he wished himself to be called—without the omission either of prefix or of affix,—a smaller man than his illustrious namesake and contemporary, the English Robert Hall,—smaller in every respect, except in a development of royal and stupendous egotism, though this was a characteristic purely inoffensive, and indicated eccentricity rather than weakness ; for he exacted from himself, as well as from his neighbours, a full recognition of his dignities and honours. The '*alter ego*,' that was admired and protected by him with such jealousy, may have been struck off and separated from his

personal identity through that mental 'flaw' which was sufficiently perceptible in his old age ; at all events, his profound deference to self was never viewed as wilful vanity, but as a species of disease ; and, in those who knew him intimately, esteem for his sterling qualities was never otherwise modified than by some hearty amusement over an enormous yet harmless foible. In preaching, his egotism was expelled by a nobler inspiration, which, possessing his whole nature, allowed no room for thoughts about the 'Rev. Robert Hall, A.M. ;' and, completely engrossed with the momentous theme of 'Christ crucified,' he gave it forth in such views and appeals as might reach and lodge in the souls of his hearers. In the pulpit, his dignified presence and sonorous voice were pervaded by an extreme animation : all his looks, gestures, and tones conspiring to form a most earnest and effective delivery of his message. His preaching was rather exclusively adapted to the adult class ; but, occasionally, the strong man passed into a mood of tenderness, and then his pleadings and appeals had an exquisite charm for the young, and gently, yet irresistibly, took hold of their heart and memory. Mr. Hall's simple and winning words of address for the young were—like the surprise of water from the rock, or of honey from the lion—not soon to be forgotten.

Another frequent and favourite assistant at Coldstream was *Mr. Coventry of Stitchell*, whose individuality of character appeared less strongly marked, only from the equal development and the harmonious operation of his gifts and graces, and from the absence of everything that might thrust itself into view as an excess, an irregularity, or an eccentricity. He was without those striking peculiarities which ought to be resolved into 'spots, blemishes, or wrinkles,' that disfigure both the intellectual and the spiritual aspect, and may be traced to some disorder in the faculties or in the dispositions. A nature that has its elements duly blended, their action unique and their motion

uniform, approximates to perfection ; yet seems to be not only more vague, but less powerful. It lacks, for the general eye, clear and commanding characteristics, these having been dimmed or effaced by its own radiant excellence. In Mr. Coventry's mind there were no storms and clouds against which his pure light could break, and separate into all its bright constituent colours ; and thus the absence of disorder in his intellect and temper, and the full harmony and serenity which reigned within him, led many observers to think that he was of plain endowments and of few and blunt sensibilities. In the vulgar estimate, symmetry detracts from stature or size, peace from power, deep life from liveliness, and light—the complement of all colours—is inferior to a single glaring tint ! An occasional ruffling of Mr. Coventry's tranquillity, by a dash of the vehemence or eccentricity which he might have borrowed from his Kelso neighbour, would have left his characteristics *apparently* more vivid and vigorous. There are no anecdotes about either his doings or his sayings ; yet, throughout a wide district on all sides of Stitchell, there is an imperishable memory of how he lived like a saint and laboured like an apostle ! His preaching displayed the harmonious action of his equally developed powers and affections. His just and comprehensive views, and his finely balanced yet wide sympathies, gave a serenity to his intensest moods of thought and emotion, whilst his aspect and utterance—though the reverse of cold—had nothing inflammatory or ranting. His earnestness was without exaggeration or feverishness, yet took a surer hold. All his words, like his looks, were suffused with the placidity and pastoral beauty of his home at Stitchell. On the young in particular, they have been described as producing impressions akin to those which attend a reading of the *twenty-third Psalm*.

Mr. Shanks of Jedburgh was another of the brethren whose aid in the communion services Mr. Riddoch often received ; and of his preaching—remarkable for eloquence in thought, style,

and delivery—Adam Thomson retained through life distinct recollections. Mr. Shanks was of an excellent, unaffected, and most amiable character as a man ; but in the pulpit his talents and influence raised him so transcendently above what he himself was elsewhere, and above what his brethren were either there or anywhere, that he was mainly regarded as a preacher, and the function of preaching was almost invariably associated with the mention of his name. Other ministers might be thought of characteristically as they appeared when engaged in pastoral visitation, or in catechising, or in the thick and heat of their presbytery's business and debate, or even as flashing forth a little pleasantry in moments of social relaxation with clerical friends ; but the general idea of Mr. Shanks was—as he shone in the pulpit. He was deservedly reckoned the most commanding orator of the Secession in the south of Scotland ; and perhaps in a wider field the same judgment would have been confirmed. His physical qualifications were of so high an order, that they could have rendered commonplace and even inane thoughts and sentiments fresh and impressive, and almost rivalled the traditional feat of Whitefield—the changing of careless hearers into passionate weepers by his mere pronounciation of '*Mesopotamia*'—a word the most unlikely for conjuring tears ! Mr. Shanks' delivery could have animated and energized what, on the lips of many, would have been a dull and dead collocation of syllables—mere dresses, which were without a true body as well as a reasonable soul ; but he never needed to play any such tricks. His intellect, which seemed often transformed into genius, promptly and abundantly supplied him with what was more than worthy to pass through his fine organ of utterance—a train of striking ideas, images, and sentiments. His preaching had the great charm of unexpectedness ; yet neither because he introduced anything odd or far-fetched, nor because he threw himself loose from a genuine sequence of thought and indulged in startling

irrelevancies. His course, through even a familiar subject, was on a higher level than the beaten and monotonous highway, with which, and the Scripture texts that have been employed to 'macadamize' it, and with all its objects and stages, the hearers were thoroughly acquainted; and that higher level enabled him to give wide glimpses in new directions, and to open up a commanding prospect of all the region through which the common highway stretched. The whole excursion, which whilst keeping closely to, was yet *above*, the old and familiar track, was thus a succession of surprises. Frequently, an unexpected view flashed forth from the very first sentence in his sermon; yet then the keen attention and interest which he had with such bold abruptness challenged, were nobly sustained, instead of being doomed to sink into listlessness and irksomeness at his headlong fall into irrecoverable bathos! He could afford in the beginning to soar and shine, being assured that he could remain on the wing and rise still higher; and the fact of his opening words being pitched on a sublime key-note, was a guarantee that he would continue and close in a not less lofty strain. His aim was to exhibit Christian truth in its majesty, and in its tender mercy, that it might win as well as rule; and his 'Table Addresses' at a communion combined the grandest representations of Him 'who liveth for ever and ever, and hath the keys of hell and of death,' with exquisitely pathetic representations of Him who 'was dead.' There have been few preachers whose eloquence was so fitted as that of Mr. Shanks to inspire earnest and intellectual youngsters with ambition for an evangelistic career and pulpit power.

The last of Mr. Riddoch's regular assistants whom we here mention was *Mr. Blackhall of Berwick-on-Tweed*; and, certainly, he was not 'a whit behind' any of those brethren, either in apostolic charity for mankind, or in apostolic zeal for his Master. He was not less amiable than Mr. Davidson of Dunse, or Mr. Coventry of Stitchell; and the presbytery of

the district possessed, in this triumvirate, a rare assemblage of the gentler graces. The presence and influence of such a meek and lovely group should have subdued all such tendencies to strife as have been too often displayed in a church court ; but, probably, the modesty of the three—though it never prevented them from setting a fine example of charity—shrunk from confronting the tempers that were rampant in keen debate, and from making peace between the violently striking hands. As a preacher, Mr. Blackhall was clear and evangelical in his exposition of doctrine and duty, and pre-eminently energetic and earnest in his application. ‘*Pleads he in earnest ?*’ There were the strongest indications of a sincerity which was as constant as a habit, yet as intense as a passion. He told his people their obligations and responsibilities most faithfully, so far as the plainest and kindest words could help him ; and, like St. Paul, he even ‘told them *weeping* ;’ but his tears were neither a rhetorical trick nor a sign of weakness, they indicated the agony of his concern for the salvation of his hearers, and the extreme vividness with which he realized his relations towards them as their spiritual monitor and Christ’s ambassador. Nor did the weeping interrupt or weaken the strain of impassioned beseeching and warning on which he had entered. The tremulous voice had no indistinctness ; but in a moment it rose above all sobbing into more powerful utterances, and the dimmed eye soon flashed forth glances of keener affection. The pathos never excited ridicule ; and not a few hearers became uneasy as the preacher was so deeply moved with grief for them, whilst they themselves had been wholly careless and untroubled. He must not be classed with the clergyman, of whom it is told that, when composing his sermons, he distributed his *tears* as systematically as his commas and periods ; inserting in the manuscript, ‘*Weep here*,’ as a direction to be followed in the pulpit ; but that, in carrying out this direction, though he had no more difficulty in turning on a flood of

tears at any given moment than in raising his handkerchief as a signal of distress, yet from either a defective vision in his tender eyes, or indistinct memory, he often wept over the wrong line, and was overcome with sorrow in passages which expressed positive gladness ! If this orator could have looked through his flood of tears keenly at his hearers, he would have found that he had moved them, not to sympathy, but to astonishment and contempt. Mr. Blackhall was wholly free from this theatrical grief: when he wept in the pulpit, it was from overpowering emotion, and was altogether involuntary ; and, instead of designing it, he was surprised into its manifestation. It was genuine, artless, and far from frequent ; and, associated with the appeals which he was then urging, it never failed to render these peculiarly impressive.

Mr. Blackhall's preaching might not, both in its elocution and its literary form, come under the description of *high oratory*; but unquestionably he spoke 'with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength;' and this kind of preaching is eminently fitted, and generally honoured, to enlighten and impress. It may, perhaps, from mainly endeavouring to lodge the saving elements of Christian truth within the souls of hearers, be less engrossed with the aim of rendering justice to the grandeur and harmony of that truth. The twofold aim of giving a duly majestic and attractive representation of the gospel, and of causing it to tell powerfully upon an audience, is seldom pursued with equal steadiness and success ; and, indeed, would require such a combination of the peculiar endowments of a Moses with those of an Aaron as exists in very few preachers. If the preacher cannot both do justice to divine truth by a noble exhibition, and at the same time employ it to operate powerfully upon his hearers, then he should chiefly devote himself to one of the two designs, and to the second rather than the first. This was what Mr. Blackhall attempted, and he was privileged to meet with a remarkable measure of suc-

cess. Some of his brethren might seek, as students of the grand 'mysteries' of redemption, to give these an adoring and epical celebration, and might thus deal with gospel truth more profoundly, elaborately, and eloquently; but Mr. Blackhall, holding that he should be the teacher of others rather than a student for his own sake, or even the truth's sake, took the simple saving elements of that truth, and with these he incessantly laboured to leaven the souls of his hearers, in order that faith, repentance, and holy obedience might be produced. Still, as if to testify that his pastorate in Berwick was intellectually as well as evangelically fruitful, and excited not only a love for and trust in the vital doctrines of grace, but also a taste for and appreciation of the most masterly and sublime style of exhibiting and defending those doctrines, there is the remarkable coincidence that his congregation should have sagaciously chosen, as his immediate successors in the ministry, two men whom the Synod subsequently appointed to chairs of theology—Dr. Balmer and Dr. Cairns. Of these the latter has been laden with an accumulation of honours which, though burdensome to his genuine modesty, are easily sustained by his merits. In the pulpit he is without a rival, and has received unprecedentedly tempting invitations to town charges; whilst his still more transcendent and unique qualifications for a theological professorship have been universally acknowledged almost since he was a student; though an odd favour for the square, if not sacred, number of *four* professors, has unfortunately—in the face of the wants and the wishes of the church, urging that he should be set to arm and train 'the sons of the prophets' against the age's dangerous scepticism—been allowed to delay his actual appointment for the term of at least ten years!

The Berwick congregation's choice of two such successors in the pastorate as Drs. Balmer and Cairns, is not only in itself a very singular occurrence, but is one which seems to attest the

enlightening and impressive character of Mr. Blackhall's ministrations. He and the other brethren, whose services Mr. Riddoch regularly obtained for sacramental occasions at Coldstream, formed as admirable a company of assistants as any congregation throughout Scotland could have desired. Yet, probably, they were all strangers to Secession pulpits in Edinburgh and Glasgow, though for these it must have been difficult to find their equals, and almost impossible to find their superiors. At that time, assistants—both for country and for town sacraments—were seldom brought from beyond neighbouring districts; and such a commanding orator as Mr. Shanks was left to shine in his Border orbit. Translations, too, from country to town charges, were then far less frequent; and the provinces were permitted generally to retain their own luminaries until these were extinguished by death. The proudest city congregations, when vacant, looked for candidates to the list of newly-licensed preachers, and not to the roll of ordained ministers; nor did they seek to console themselves for the loss, by death, of their own pastors, by 'eloping' with those who had been united by the most solemn vows to their rural neighbours. They had not yet come to view themselves as specially needing or deserving the large 'experience' which ordained ministers have acquired; nor had they begun to expect that country congregations would undertake to deal with the 'raw material' in young licentiates, and prepare these to be admirable pastors for city charges that think themselves more advanced in intelligence and culture. Now, however, town congregations demand pastors from their country neighbours with all the coolness of Brigham Young in requiring husbands to give up their spouses to his Mormon harem; and the first step towards the appropriation, is the engaging of those pastors to dispense the sacrament, though the association of this solemn ordinance with the 'trial services' of candidates, and with the moods of thought and feeling which may then be

expected both in the preachers and in their hearers, is rather questionable.

The varied talents and eloquence of the ministers who officiated along with Mr. Riddoch at the communion, were then, in all their exercises, invariably employed upon the leading doctrines of Christianity; and an earnestly attentive youth could not have been placed in more advantageous circumstances for receiving just views and powerful impressions of the gospel. The services on such an occasion were, from the peculiar care with which they had been prepared, the fervour with which they were delivered, and the powerful effect which they produced, emphatically designated by devout people 'the work;' and the fact that then all this 'work' of a communion Sabbath at Coldstream was gone through in the open air on Tweed Green, tended to make a young hearer like Adam Thomson more susceptible to the influence of the doctrines which were proclaimed and symbolized.¹

¹ Long afterwards, in his *Comparative View of English and Scotch Dissenters*, Dr. Thomson gave the following graphic description of the spot where, as a hearer, he had witnessed, and as a minister he had taken a lead in conducting, the sacramental services: 'Fast by the banks of the beautiful river, which here divides the two kingdoms, there is a fine plain on which the tent and tables, and the chairs of such as chose to use them, were placed; and then there is a rising ground, or *brae*, which answered the purpose of a gallery. The chiet part of the audience sat here on the bare ground, looking down upon the very ford which many of our fathers had passed to fight against the English for their liberties and their lives; but seeing, at the same time, the magnificent bridge, that seems now to tell of the union of the two countries, which should never have been but one. All the immediate scenery was at that season (the second Sabbath of June) exquisitely rich; and in the distance appeared the lofty English mountains called the Cheviots; while quite near were the hills on which the Scottish army encamped, just above the bloody field of Flodden. The communicants and spectators, indeed, sat on the very spot to which the bodies of the heroes that fell in that disastrous battle were brought for interment. They were, besides, almost within view of, and only a few miles distant from, the remains of at least four ancient castles, built as places of defence and safety during the Border wars; while now many Borderers, —Scotchmen and Englishmen, as a venerable man of God has been

The landscape around and the sky above gave, through sense and soul, such a thrilling charm to the words spoken as transcended the native eloquence of the speakers, and defied all the resources of art in church-architecture and decoration to rival. The truths of Revelation could not have been unfolded alongside of a brighter page of Nature ; and the summer loveliness of the one, suffusing the gracious discoveries of the other, lent these, in their oral exhibition, a subtler power than even genius in the preacher could have communicated. Nor was the inspiration of the scene felt less, but rather more, by the preacher than by the hearers ; and, under its quickening and suggestive virtue, he enriched his discourse with new and more felicitous forms, and fresher hues of thought and expression.

Yet it must not be supposed that those Border ministers, of whom we have been speaking, were much superior to the majority of their brethren throughout Scotland, in availing themselves liberally of the peculiar advantages which *preaching in the open air* on sacramental occasions unquestionably offered. Few, if any, of them sufficiently adapted their sermons to the grand natural temple in which they delivered them ; nor, when composing them, had they anticipated the mental moods with which they might in such a sanctuary be pronounced and heard. Those sermons were wanting in the analogies, illustrations, and similitudes which could have been drawn so abundantly and effectively from the floor and the roof of that

heard to say to the communicants,—had met with sweet accord to commemorate the death and celebrate the triumphs of the Prince of Peace ! They were also within the precincts of an abbey which the “ Man of Sin ” had occupied for ages, but from which he had long been displaced by the light and power of that Reformation, the principles of which were revered and held fast by the people of God, now assembled to testify their attachment to these very principles over the symbols of the broken body and shed blood of the Lord of Glory. Had there indeed been the slightest propriety in taking any out-of-door place at all for such a purpose, none could have been thought of more remarkably suitable, or more strikingly interesting than *Coldstream Green*.’—*Comparative View*, pp. 177, 178.

temple ; and they lacked the poetry that would have harmonized them with the scene.

Open-air preaching had not the glowing and sun-burnt complexion which it should have displayed. Its colourless aspect was more accordant with the paper on which the discourses had been written, and with the whitewashed walls of the meeting-house, within which they might have been recited. Its garb rustled more with theological phylacteries than with poetic luxuriances. Often were the services in the open air as little changed, even in tints, from what they would have been in the meanest chapel, as if a thick mist had overspread the scene, blotting out its varied beauty and significance. Yet, open-air preaching might have been expected to be widely different, when we consider at how early a stage in the history of Christianity, and by what preachers, it was practised. Jesus Christ himself left the temple, the synagogue, and the 'upper room,' for 'the mount,' and 'the sea-shore ;' and the grandest oracles of Him, 'who spoke as never man spoke,' were his open-air sermons. In Scotland, when pure Christianity was driven from churches and houses, 'hill-side preaching' began, and there the persecuted minister, in sunshine or storm, delivered to his afflicted but faithful flock the sermon which he had prepared in some 'den or cave,' and which, doubtless, would show traces both of the natural 'study,' in which, with few or no books, but with many rushing suggestions, it was composed but perhaps not written, and of the natural temple in which it was spoken, though the poetry which then marked his preaching would have a wintry rigour and bareness, as if reflecting the bleak muirland near his hiding-place. Afterwards, in a happier era, when 'tent-preaching' was adopted, to accommodate the immense crowds of Secession members that came together on a communion Sabbath, the stern character which preaching had acquired as an outcast, might, under more genial influences, have relaxed and shot forth 'boughs and blossoms' exube-

rantly. Yet, standing up, along with a vast and sympathetic congregation, amidst the profuse grandeurs and graces of the natural world, Scottish preachers were too much disposed to treat these as utter impertinences,—at least, they neglected to turn them to account; and the hearers listened to those preachers' words, and gazed upon the inexhaustible beauty and variety of God's works, without learning how 'near of kin' were Nature and Christianity, and how suggestively, though inarticulately, the former accompanied the latter; whereas, Christ made the ephemeral *lily* an immortal witness to God's care for his people, and, in doing so, made the lily still more fair and the doctrine more clear and cheering.

It cannot, however, be denied that the open-air preaching at Coldstream sacrament, though it did not take full advantage of its peculiar powers and facilities for impressing, was eminently impressive; and the more thoughtful and emotional of the hearers would not only appreciate the similitudes, illustrations, and lessons which the preacher drew—too sparingly—from the scene around, but would also, for themselves, expand and multiply those analogies. Many of the Scripture quotations which adorned the preaching, would seem fitted for the open air to receive, and to convey to the human soul. To a congregation, sitting at noon under a bright and sultry sky, the prophet's simile about 'the shadow of a great rock in a weary land,' must have had a vivid meaning and beauty which the finest exposition would have failed to elicit. The sunshine, pouring down its tropical heat, would explain such points of the passage as the 'weary land,' and the pleasant 'shadow,' even to the most juvenile hearer, with a matchless force. Often, too, the closing sermon on a communion Sabbath, delivered as the sunset threw its ruddy or golden splendours, and diffused its exceeding calm over the landscape, was on a grand subject—such, perhaps, as the glory and blessedness of saints in heaven, and their ascriptions of praise to the

Redeemer; and the stillness and beauty all around lent an indescribable charm to the meditations, whilst the Scripture texts seemed to proceed from 'the voice of the Lord God walking among the trees in the cool of the day.'

We have referred at length to those sacramental services by Mr. Riddoch and his assistants, because they were treasured in Adam Thomson's recollections, as having largely contributed, in early youth, both to confirm his acceptance of 'the one thing needful,' and to give him 'joy in believing.' Of the open-air sermons, he retained grateful and hallowed impressions; and, in his view, 'Tweed Green' preserved its sacramental associations for nearly fifty years after it had been wholly abandoned to secular uses, and had become generally known as the site for a cattle market, and the arena for vagrant 'horsemanship.'

He had also, at this stage, been introduced by elderly and devout members of the congregation to some of the 'fellowship' meetings of the town; and the exercises, which were peculiar to these, helped his spiritual progress. Those societies differed much from the 'prayer meetings' that have displaced them. They consisted wholly of *laymen*, there being no clergyman to preside over or to take the lead in their proceedings, and no women to attend as mere hearers. These classes, though not expressly interdicted, were invariably absent, probably from a fear lest the sense of equality should have been disturbed by their presence,—a clergyman taking too large a share in the proceedings, and members of the modest sex taking too small a share, or none at all; so that, between the copious eloquence of the former and the silence of the latter, there would have been a monopoly, rather than a fellowship, established. Each society numbered from four to six members, and these met once a week, for an hour or more in the evening, in a room of one of their own dwelling-houses. They were all marked by piety and intelligence, and some of them

by a strong and well-exercised intellect, and a large acquaintance with doctrinal and experimental religion—being diligent readers both of their Bibles and of their own hearts. Two or three, at each meeting, engaged in praise and prayer ; and then all present, in rotation, offered their views and reflections on some religious topic which had been proposed at the previous meeting, and on which they had read and meditated in the interval. Adam Thomson was admitted to more than one of those societies, and their proceedings were all the more profitable to him from his not being prematurely led or expected to be more, for some years, than simply a hearer. If the boy had been called to take his turn in praying and in offering religious remarks before elderly Christians, the tendency would have been to foster his self-conceit, to tempt him, in devotion, to acquire a copious phraseology that did not spring from the heart, and to render him indifferent to all utterances except his own. We have had, however, in connection with modern *revivals*, more than one instance of an ‘infant phenomenon,’ led into the pulpit to aim at the conversion of a large audience, and then—as if his light were too precious to shine within a limited and single sphere—he is carried over all the country, to prove his apostolic gifts ! The absurd and mischievous issue of such an encouragement of those boy-preachers is apparent ; and the injury thereby done to themselves, to their hearers, and to the cause of Christianity, is incalculable ; whilst the mockery it casts upon the grand ordinance of preaching would delight all classes of infidels. Those forward juveniles are not to be classed with the ‘babes and sucklings, out of whose mouth the Lord has ordained strength ;’ nor can they be placed, either for modesty or for usefulness, on a footing with those children who have undertaken to teach the neglected old to read the Bible. They sink far below the children who seek to do good in a child-like way ; and yet they claim to rival the evangelists—from St. Peter on the day of

Pentecost, down, not only to Whitefield, but to the millennial angel flying through the heaven over the earth with the gospel! Certainly it is not a want of the pulpit in this or in any age, that it should be mounted by *boys*; the demand is rather for *men*, with nobler and larger manhood in intellect, learning, and piety.

The Coldstream seniors were judiciously kind in their patronage of the 'young disciple,' doing nothing that might injure that tender diffidence which is not only a graceful ornament, but a promising constituent, in the juvenile character. For several years they did not invite him to open his lips at their meetings; and the young and silent member could listen to the grave and homely words, in which the good men poured forth their devotions and meditations, without any distraction either from anxiety or from vanity about what, in his turn, he should himself say. Yet, but for the hold which religion had acquired over him, a youth, with a mere tithe of his sprightliness and eagerness, would have felt those exercises to be uncongenial and irksome, and the hour engrossed with them one of downright penance. They were certainly not of a kind to yield gratification to, or even to gain toleration from, the *natural* dispositions and tempers of the young; they would have been tedious and dreary to the *unchanged* heart, whether in boys or in adults; and the deep and growing delight which Adam Thomson received from them in his punctual attendance, attested the operations of grace upon his natural tastes and tendencies. It was fortunate for him that the most excellent among the members of those 'fellowship' bands were also the most amiable, combining beauty with strength of Christian character. They were free from that severity of manner which is said to have once distinguished middle-aged and old Christians, especially those who were office-bearers in the Secession Church, in their intercourse with, and treatment of the young. And perhaps the memory of some readers calls

up a group of such grimly rigorous 'overseers,' with 'dreadful faces thronged,' around the collection plate! Within the church, those faces seemed to gather all the possible expressions of unsympathizing, forbidding, and rebuking sternness, when their steady eye met the more roving eye of a juvenile. Every glance from the former appeared to shoot forth a sentence of excommunication against the latter. The boy could not then lift a rose to smell without provoking a frown on the brow of some of those jealous onlookers. There are saints, indeed, in whose peculiarities of temper and defects of self-training, Christianity has its amiable graces obscured, or but partially and uncouthly manifested.

The members of the Border Fellowship Societies, who welcomed their boy-associate, had no such harshness of demeanour to repel his confidence; for, although they were strict, both as Christians and as Seceders, yet the meekness, gentleness, and charity of the gospel not only filled their hearts, but overflowed in their deportment, looks, and language, especially towards any of the young who were earnestly seeking guidance 'with their faces Zionwards.' The 'beauty of the Lord' was *upon*, as well as *within* them, shining through their smiles and words from its inner shrine, and adding to the strong virtues which command esteem, the charm of the softer graces which attract affection. They were careful lest, through anything that was either undutiful or unlovely on their part, a 'weak brother' should 'stumble,' or any of those 'little ones,' whom Christ once fenced round against all 'despisers' with a tremendous menace, should be kept from entering the fold. A tender consideration for Adam Thomson's unripe age, and for his small religious experience, prompted them to make all their explanations of the evangelical faith and practice full and simple, and to fortify him with the most impressive reasons for his realizing that Christianity had paramount and perpetual claims upon him, and with the most powerful motives for his

seeking to give it an absorbing, constant, and everlasting devotion, and not such a fickle liking as would fall off with the flowers and weeds of his springtime of fancy and passion. Had he been their convert, pupil, and son, those aged saints could not have been more affectionate and judicious in tending his discipleship; and he never ceased to be grateful for the theology which they taught him so earnestly, and with such a love for the truth, and such a tender concern for his soul. Their reverence, too, in devotion, and the consciousness which it awoke within himself, of an awful Presence in the midst of the 'two or three' supplicants, vouchsafing 'fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,' were often remembered; and his associations with those early seasons of divine communion were hallowed and delightful. In his many recollections of those 'fellowship meetings,' there was not a single trace of anything *ludicrous* about either the members or their proceedings; and this indicates how completely, during all the years of his term of attendance, his views and feelings regarding the devout men and their devout engagements must have differed from those that were natural to the giddiness of youth. All the grotesque associations and laughable incidents which a humorous fancy would have been tempted to trace and preserve, had been soon effaced by the overflowing tide of devotional sentiment.

The salutary effect produced by select books, preaching, and fellowship meetings, was decisively strengthened by such a dispensation of providence as, whilst deeply wounding the heart, is often appointed to convey saving impressions to the soul, and to heal and sanctify all the anguish and adversity of life. The 'king of terrors' himself is sometimes the ordained minister of Christ, to carry into the family which he has desolated the blessings of redemption, and to enrich one of the bereaved members with 'precious faith,' leaving a soul saved within the circle where he had struck down a frail body. Thus,

under the rule of his Divine Conqueror, death is not only the *last* 'ministering spirit' to all the mortal 'heirs of salvation,' but he is also the *first* to bring 'salvation' within the choice of not a few, and to constitute them its 'heirs.' He is employed directly to convey all the redeemed from earth to the kingdom of glory, and indirectly to introduce some, who had previously rejected the gospel, into the kingdom of grace. And surely a saint would not, at any period, grudge to die, nor would his loving and pious relatives hesitate to surrender him, if he and they were to foresee that this death would be instrumental in the conversion of a dear friend; and of the 'joy' that there is 'in heaven over one sinner that repents,' not the least rapturous share would belong to the new-arrived spirit, whose release from earthly bonds had caused the grief which issued in that sinner's repentance.

The event which exercised a crowning spiritual influence upon Adam Thomson, and confirmed and sealed his discipleship, was the death of his mother (in September 1795),—a bereavement the most calamitous to her seven surviving children, one and all of whom she had cared for and reared lovingly, piously, and wisely; and to their father, of whom she had been the tender and faithful 'help-meet' from a girlish period of life. The event, too, seemed almost as untimely for herself as for the group of little ones, all more or less closely under her wing, for she was only in her *thirty-fifth* year; and thus her sunset was at noontide, when she might have expected a long bright afternoon, if not a serene and lingering eve, of domestic usefulness and felicity, instead of the sudden night which extinguished all her fondness and solicitude before these were relaxed, and terminated all her power and means of doing good before these were in the least abated, or rendered unnecessary. She had strong ties to her *earthly* home, where all were dependent upon her affection for their happiness, and where the most seemed helpless and forlorn without her; whilst,

in her *heavenly* home, the three infants, who had already preceded her thither, were safe and blissful far above the need of a mother's care. Yet, assured that death would be 'gain' to herself, and that the loss which it brought upon her family would be more than compensated by a closer circle of divine guardianship, she was willing to depart,—nay, rejoicing in hope that the same 'Shepherd' who was conducting and supporting her through the dark valley so graciously, that she 'feared no evil' in the awful shadows around, would guide those whom she loved in 'green pastures and beside still waters,' would restore them from wandering, and would 'lead them in the paths of righteousness for his own name's sake,'—she, in the last hour, when love is bowed down with unspeakable regrets for shortcomings in the past, and with a burden of manifold anxieties for the future, gladly realized that, with such a 'Shepherd' for *her and hers*, she could 'want nothing' for these in life and for herself in death. In full tranquillity she took farewell of the family; and engaging all to meet her again in the better world, where death and partings were unknown, and where the reunited household would be ever with the Lord, she gently expired.

But from those she left behind, how much had been withdrawn in her last breath! They mourned over the bereavement as the severest that could have been inflicted; whilst the fact that their sorrow for the deceased was blended with the assurance of hope regarding her endless happiness, gave them a deeper consciousness of the loss which they had themselves sustained in what was 'gain' to her. They had no call to weep for the departed saint herself; but they had all the more reason to weep for themselves, and their privation of what she had been as a wife and a mother. The husband, left with the charge of seven motherless children, was indeed a fellow-heir of the grace which had made her what she was; and knowing that this grace could cause the present heavy affliction to yield to the sufferers—if these were 'rightly exer-

cised'—the most precious 'fruits,' he aimed at acquiring resignation to the discipline, and sought to be as far from 'fainting under,' as he was from 'despising, the Lord's chastening.' Some of the children long remembered how they had overheard him reciting or chanting from the plaintive and consolatory Psalms, in the night watches, when he supposed that all under his roof were asleep, and that no human ear could listen to the communings of his troubled and forlorn spirit with the God of comfort. At other times he sought solace by perusing religious books and hymns on affliction; but for the dreary anguish which made him a lonely watcher in the night season, and broke through his Scotch reserve and the stillness of solitude into audible 'plaint,' he chose the words which the Psalmist was inspired to prepare for the sorely stricken 'Israel of God' in all generations; and those 'songs in the night,' which have cheered the sorrowful, as well as the tempted, the fallen, and the penitent, ever since David composed them, he kept reciting and chanting, as if, on every new rehearsal, they breathed forth deeper sympathy and soothing.

To his second son, Adam, the bereavement was intensely distressing. He had reached an age—that of sixteen years—when grief for a mother retains much of the frenzy of childhood, and borrows largely from the strength and constancy of manhood. The sorrow of children over the death of a loving and beloved mother is, for a time, all-absorbing, bewildering, and despairing, up to the full capacities of their nature. She stood between them and the whole world, reflecting all its sunshine and kindness, and adding the radiance of her own love, whilst she intercepted and kept back from them all that world's fickleness and coldness. If at any time they suddenly found that she was out of their presence, and that no calls, nor any of the piercing shrieks which soon followed, brought her back, their fears became not only indefinite, but unlimited and uncontrollable; and in the interval of a few minutes before she re-

appeared, they were in the wildest consternation, from the belief that they were never more to see her ! When she really is away for ever, it is difficult to mitigate the outbreak of their sorrow, for they more quickly understand a little of the mystery of the grave which has received her body than of the heaven which has welcomed her spirit ; and the grave, in connection with her fondly loved face and form, fills them with agony and horror. But this grief of theirs is, necessarily and wisely, transient, though there will be an oft-recurring consciousness of their loss, attended by pensive yet dearly cherished recollections of the departed. Adam Thomson's age gave him to experience much both of the frenzied emotion of childish sorrow and of the settled mood of *manly* mourning over his mother's death. The prolonged and tender nursing which he had received from her through months of dangerous illness, and through years of precarious health, and the yearning anxiety with which she had then and subsequently ministered to his spiritual well-being, indelibly impressed him with the exquisite yet constant and durable qualities of her maternal character. All other friends had come and gone, bestowing on him their occasional favours and kindnesses ; but *her* presence and *her* ministry of love were unfailing ; and these had left their own image on his then susceptible mind. The vivid impression of what she had been to him stood beside the awful blank caused by her removal ; and, reflecting on what would have been abstracted from the last five or six years of his life had he then been motherless, he could form an estimate of what would be wanting in the future. His case, however, must have been all the sadder if the lesson of her death, giving new emphasis to the many persuasions of her living voice, and to the instructions which he had otherwise in recent years obtained, had not urged him to cast himself more unreservedly upon the grace and guardianship of his ' Father in heaven ! ' ' Father, be Thou the guide of my youth,' was at once his prayer and his

resolution ; and the loneliness with which his mother's death surrounded him, became a sanctuary in which he held a divine communion that yielded him not only consolation in, but also compensation for, his forlorn distress. Immediately after, and perhaps not a little in consequence of, this bereavement, he determined henceforth to follow his elder brother in preparing for the solemn duties of the ministerial office. Peter had, from his earliest years, uniformly and passionately aspired to the pulpit ; yet his parents had done nothing to give him the least bias to this choice, and indeed they long refrained from expressly sanctioning or indirectly encouraging it, since they wished it to be a choice that sprung spontaneously, and from pure, evangelical motives, and that was in keeping with the piety of his character and deportment. On these points they obtained full satisfaction, before they approved of his self-dedication to the ministry.

Such a cautious and lengthened scrutiny was unnecessary in the case of Adam—at his comparatively ripe age, and with his more definite motives and settled views—resolving to study for the sacred profession. There was no call upon paternal solicitude to test this choice through a course of years. It was not one of the whims of infancy, nor had he adopted it in childish imitation of his brother's ambition ; and that zeal for God's glory and for man's well-being which should be the impelling motive of every candidate for the ministry, and that piety of spirit and demeanour which should be his leading characteristic, were discovered in Adam before he made known his purpose, and thus they did not need the slow elucidation of time. The same tender parental anxiety about doing the right, which for years delayed to sanction Peter's self-dedication from infancy, refrained at once from offering any opposition or discouragement to Adam's maturer resolution. The father was, in the latter case, without the invaluable co-adviser who, when assisting him, in the former case, to

observe a wisely cautious policy, would not fail to temper prudent restraint with gentlest love ; yet, doubtless, the influence of the mother, who had been so recently taken away, could be recognised in the prompt and hearty assent which Adam received, from his surviving parent, to the intimation of his design to study for the pulpit. Many a Scottish father, however, who had been delighted to see a son show, from infancy, a decided preference for the clerical profession, and who had all along, without searching into the boy's current motives or prospective fitness, sanctioned and fostered his choice, would have been more than startled at a *second* son expressing his earnest desire to prepare for the same profession, even though the latter should give proofs, not only of having deliberated duly, and of being influenced by a pure and settled enthusiasm, but also of possessing distinguished qualifications. It not unfrequently happens, that a youth of remarkable promise as to talents, piety, and evangelizing zeal, has his aspirations to devote himself to preaching crossed and finally frustrated through his parents having already elected their first-born, whom, at an age when he scarcely knew his right hand from his left, they inclined and stimulated to be a minister, before they had the slightest guarantee that he would be decently qualified. They would not incur the cost and responsibility of rearing *two* sons for the sacred profession ; yet, whilst eager for the honour of having *one* son trained for it, their mode of selection took no account either of superior qualifications, or of any qualifications at all ; and the one that was rich in natural and spiritual endowments for the pulpit, was appointed to a secular occupation ; and his brother, who had none of the special gifts desirable, and only a very small measure of the ordinary graces indispensable to the pulpit, dragged through a barren course of preparation for ministerial work—all because the parents determined to seize upon the first who came, and from his birth to set him apart for the

service of the Lord, as if the ministry were his inalienable birthright! This capital grievance in connection with the pride of many a pious Scottish father to educate a son for the pulpit has been seldom exposed; and attention has been generally turned upon a collateral and a minor evil—that of the parent not only denying to himself proper comfort and rest, but withholding from his other children various educational advantages of even a common and necessary kind, in order that he may devote what has thus been spared, to the costly clerical training of the favourite son. This student has the leisure and the means for intermeddling with the treasures of ancient and modern literature, and of secular and sacred knowledge secured to him by a course of injustice towards his brothers, who are removed from school after getting a mere smattering of the common branches of learning, and tied down to manual labour, in order that their earnings may warrant more of the father's savings to be expended upon the elaborate culture of that student, who surely cannot have a very quiet conscience in the midst of the intellectual luxuries gathered around him, from the educational stinting, if not starvation, of his brethren! The half-lettered brothers, who yield such lowly yet important service to a candidate for the ministry, are seldom, indeed, found to repine at or grudge what has been exacted from them. They are too pure and magnanimous in their love, either to envy the position to which they are helping him to rise, or to complain of the drudgery entailed. *Scottish nature*, we have heard, is rather prone, in the midst of self-denying and heroic beneficence, to indulge in a little grumbling and groaning, and even to assail the person for whose sake it chooses to bear hardships and to make sacrifices with a few taunts and sarcasms, which would have been suppressed if *the form and manner* of its generosity had been as exquisite as the *spirit*; but the self-denial of those brothers was so thoroughly fine as to appear wholly unconscious, and

neither a word nor a look of theirs expressed the least of bitterness or murmuring. They would not gall the conscience of the brother whom they were so serving; yet, if that conscience were tender, the very delicacy of their fraternal generosity would give deeper wounds. Sometimes, alas! the noble self-denial of the family group has met with ingratitude from him whom they exalted—the exaltation involving, on his part, the base return of estrangement and isolation; and when this happens, the church has invariably to lament the introduction of an unprofitable minister—a mere ‘hireling.’ Such a family episode is a wild travesty of the story of Joseph and his brethren.

But those grievances were unknown in the Thomson family. There was no excess of favour to the first son, in early stimulating and in constantly encouraging him to aspire to the ministry; and there was no defect of favour to the second son, in resisting his settled desire for the same profession. Equal-handed justice was done to both; and from Peter’s choice, made in infancy, the paternal sanction was withheld for some years, until his qualifications could be judged, whilst these, in Adam’s case, were so evident before and at the time of his intimating a choice, that his father at once acquiesced. The father had not blindly vowed that he would, in all contingencies, have *one* son in the ministry; yet he did not refuse to approve of *two* undertaking to prepare for it. Nor did the training of the two involve any stinting of education, or a premature apprenticeship to toil, on the part of the younger members of the family. The former passed through a college and divinity hall course without shortening the school attendance of the latter by a single pleasant and profitable hour. And yet, if these younger members had borne, as they never did, nor were asked to do, any such deprivation of their educational rights, they would not have lacked their reward in the after-course of the two brothers, though one of these was cut

off in early manhood, after only a few years of eminently faithful and successful ministrations. The days and years, however, of mature and fruitful manhood which were subtracted from his life, seem to have been added, both in number and in value, to the life of his surviving brother, who was enabled to 'fulfil' a pastorate of more than fifty-four years, and who, in what he achieved for the free and wide circulation of the English Bible, had his single force not only doubled, but incalculably multiplied. Nor, in the ministerial course of the elder two, was there any 'isolation' from the sphere of the younger members; but the tenderest affection, the fullest sympathy, and the utmost readiness to be of service, were ever reciprocated; and neither difference of pursuit nor distance in place—nothing, indeed, but death itself—prevailed to make them a less united family than when they were all under a father's roof, listening to the charge of a dying mother, that they should love one another!

We have said that Adam Thomson's resolution for the ministry was not in servile imitation of his brother Peter's example; yet, whilst it was independently formed, it could scarcely fail to be confirmed by the conversation of the latter. Peter had, by this time, passed through three sessions of the Edinburgh University; but the vacations he invariably spent at home, revising what he had acquired, and preparing for new accessions, as well as renewing his health in the balmy yet bracing atmosphere of Tweedside during summer and autumn. Adam was then his constant associate, and enjoyed his fullest confidence. The student's talk was of his college experience, relieved occasionally by Edinburgh sight-seeing. He spoke of the city rather in its venerable than in its fair features; for it was the 'old town,' and not the 'new,' that he had explored and cared for. He delighted to describe the rocky ridge which not only has the castle at one extremity and Holyrood at the other, but supports a long range of eight or ten storeyed

buildings, among which stands the house of John Knox, a man mightier far than the monarchs, statesmen, and warriors that dwelt near him on that ridge ; nor did he forget the Grassmarket, where the martyrs suffered, and the Greyfriars' churchyard, where they found a grave and a memorial stone, that will continue to draw larger and more reverent companies of pilgrims than visit any of the neighbouring tombs and tablets. His chief recollections, however, which also most fascinated the eager listener, were about the college and his studies. The professors were very great men, according to the estimate of the speaker, who had seen them ; but they were far greater men in the imagination of the listener, who had *not* seen them, and who never could hear enough of their incomparable wisdom, eloquence, and wit ; whilst he ardently longed for the privilege of receiving their instructions directly, instead of through imperfect and fragmentary reports. The stately pile of university class-rooms—far more 'hospitable,' in our northern clime, to learning and science than any 'academic grove' could have been—did not more transcend the humble, cot-like parish school than the professors appeared to surpass the schoolmaster. When Peter sketched the personal characteristics of such guides in learning and philosophy as Dalzel, Finlayson, and Dugald Stewart ; when he defined their several spheres, and explained the orderly work that was done in these, and its uses both as knowledge and as mental discipline ; and when he particularized instances of astonishing progress made by some youth who, in spite of difficulties and discouragements that would have prevented almost any other student from reaching an *average* excellence, had surmounted all opposition, outstripped all rivalry, and won a clear pre-eminence, Adam's desire to enter the University and to share its privileges became intense. The course of preparation for the University, demanding hard and incessant toil, and not a few occasional struggles, lay before him as an enchanted road ;

yet the end itself was more stedfastly kept in view, and more ardently cherished, though, in the case of too many young men, it has happened that they have conceived such an absorbing passion for those preparatory studies as must weaken, if not extinguish, their previous enthusiasm for the ministry, which the studies were meant greatly to subserve, and not at all to supplant. The literature, science, and philosophy of the University should have resembled the three damsels in Bunyan's 'Palace Beautiful,' in arming candidates for the ministry 'with northern steel from top to toe,' for the service and defence of the Christian faith, though with nothing to cover *the back*, and guard them in a temporary flight, or a final retreat; but, instead of being handmaids to the evangelical cause, they became mistresses, seducing and ensnaring the devoted loyalty which those students should have preserved to Christianity. If one of these young men were turned away merely from becoming a minister, it might be doubtful to himself and to others, whether, and how far, he had erred; but if he should abandon the faith itself, and no longer profess to be a Christian, the evil of this choice would not be in the least questionable, and would defy all compensation; for what achievements in literature and science, with all their gain and fame, could counterbalance the wrecking of that faith which involved his eternal well-being? Should his love of learning have induced him only to give up the ministry, and permitted him to hold fast the Christian faith, he cannot be too grateful for the influence which kept him back from making this tremendous sacrifice; still, when he considers the other 'exchange,' and looks at the advantages accruing from his literary or scientific devotedness, they must appear small and fleeting in the light of the infallible Oracle, that 'they who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever,'—escaping from the obscurity of the humblest ministerial lot on earth into the brightness of a sky that shall never be 'wrapped together as

a scroll,' but shall preserve itself and them in eternal lustre. This surpassing glory is awarded also to those men who, by their writings, convert sinners and educate saints; and in this class will be found not a few great preachers, whose *written* words have been far more diffusely and permanently influential than their *spoken* words. At the head of these, both as successful preachers and as still more successful writers, stand the APOSTLES themselves, who, by their 'epistles,' rather than by their discourses, have been honoured to build up the church of Christ in all ages and over the whole world; and not only of Paul, but of his brethren, it might be said that their 'presence' and 'speech,' even though these had been worthy of the noblest orators, were yet 'weak' and 'contemptible,' *compared* with their 'weighty and powerful letters.' A perpetual day of Pentecost, with its gift of tongues, attends these apostolic writings, and disseminates them among all 'peoples' and tribes, in every known language.

Peter and Adam Thomson felt that, by themselves, college culture was to be pursued, not as an end, but as a means, qualifying for the function of preaching; and their enthusiasm for the latter was stirred and strengthened by every new evidence of the tributary relations in which the former stood to it. Their conception of the highest possible degree of culture was, that it should only the more effectively, humbly, and spontaneously show itself subsidiary to the pulpit, whilst a genuine zeal for the pulpit should, as the master-passion for the paramount interest, rule over any attachment to learning instead of being thereby subdued or thwarted. Adam's earnest views about the ministry, and his eagerness to enter upon preparatory studies, were not a little confirmed by the frequent discussions which he had with his brother on the bearings and advantages of a liberal training, and by the exemplification of these in the case of several distinguished preachers, whom his brother had heard during his college attendance in

Edinburgh. At that time, both in town and in country, Seceders were far from being 'nomadic' hearers, in quest of 'fresh fields and pastures new;' but, on the contrary, they kept to their own minister, who, when Sabbath came round, was scarcely more certain of finding his church standing *where* it had been, and *as* it had been, than of meeting the very same congregation, and of recognising 'all the old familiar faces!' Not a few of the reasons which now induce or permit many to go into another church than their own, were then unknown. Inclement weather could not deter a Seceder from undertaking a long journey to his own church, and tempt him to worship comfortably in that which was only a few yards from his door; whereas, at present, a shower of rain drives multitudes into the nearest sanctuary. Nor would a Seceder have been moved to desert his own church for an hour, by the opening of a new church in his immediate neighbourhood, or the induction of a new minister, or the appearance of a new precentor; but the most trivial novelties will now attract thousands away from their own places of worship. Far weightier and more honourable motives were then exclusively in operation, and even these were generally resisted and overcome. They related to nothing less than the hearing of the gospel from some preacher who, for his eloquence and talents, or his personal connections, excited a special interest; yet how often would a plain and simple, if not a dull and meagre preacher be surrounded by the whole of his congregation, when a brilliant and powerful pulpit-orator of wide fame was thundering in the district, and though not a few in that self-denying congregation had keen susceptibilities to the charm of eloquence, and were intense admirers of the stranger's genius! Many, too, would not leave their own church to listen to the preaching of a friend or near relative, in whose career they were deeply concerned, and to whom they would gladly have listened, if they could have done so without lapsing into the offence of 'promiscuous hearing!'

Unless he were brought into the pulpit of their own church, they felt that they had no lawful opportunity of hearing him. Every instance of wandering to hear a stranger was reprobated as a breach of the *tenth* command—a ‘coveting’ of some neighbour’s minister; for this personage, though not mentioned in the household inventory along with the ‘neighbour’s wife, nor his ox, nor his ass,’ must surely be included in the wide clause, ‘nor anything that is thy neighbour’s,’ and therefore prohibited. To step into a church that was not one’s own—especially if it also belonged to a different denomination—was accounted worse than to stay at home without a sufficient excuse; and occasionally, indeed, when a pastor had begun to rebuke some members of his flock for absence from their pews on the bygone Sabbath, the offenders admitted the charge, but at once added, as a palliation which might appease clerical anger, ‘We were at no other church; and if we did not hear you, sir, we were not running after any other preacher!’ It was either bold or obtuse for them to offer, in extenuation, what was a real and gross aggravation of their fault; yet it is said to have but seldom failed in disarming the minister of much of his severity, though probably he was often amused at, rather than hoodwinked by, the crafty but clumsy compliment which assured him that there was, in the case, no rival preacher to be dreaded, and that his people were free from ‘itching ears,’ whether or not they had the ‘adder’s’ insensibility. It is a fact that the minister and his elders, acting as a ‘session,’ were more eager in detecting, and more rigorous in condemning, occasional ‘wanderers,’ than in dealing with those who occasionally went to no church; and that an absentee was far less exposed to session artillery when he was at home, than when he paid a visit to some neighbouring church. Students, however, who were looking forward to the ministry, either got or took leave to relax a little the strictness of the law against ‘promiscuous hearing;’ and this dispensation, if moderately indulged in, was

held to be advantageous, since it gave them an opportunity of seeing a rich variety of gifts, graces, and energies, embodied in meaner or grander models of excellence, and consecrated to the service of the 'gospel. Instead of being restricted to 'Paul, Apollos, or Cephas,' singly and alone, they could say that 'ALL' of these were *theirs*, and that they were to profit, freely and indiscriminately, from all the great preachers they could find, drawing inspiration and stimulus from every model pulpit.

Peter Thomson had, in Edinburgh, availed himself of this class privilege ; and though the number of resident clergymen was then much smaller there than now, and though, too, far fewer clergymen from a distance then visited that city, and appeared in its pulpits, yet there was at that time in the Scottish metropolis a considerable variety of pulpit oratory inviting study. In the Established Church, dominant Moderatism—not to allude to the influence of David Hume—had been baneful to preaching, both in its substance and style, reducing the gospel to a meagre and inane scheme of morality, expounded in elegant little essays ; nor was there any token of the grand revival which in the next generation visited the Kirk. Principal Robertson—who, if he had possessed evangelical views and zeal, might have been the greatest preacher of his day in Scotland—was dead, and not a syllable of his about the CROSS on Calvary was or could be remembered ; whilst whole pages of his elaborate pathos about Mary Queen of Scots at the block were circulating over the country ; and being also inserted in school-books, they would thence pass into the minds of all juvenile readers, to be preserved as his and their tribute of sympathy for the miseries of a queen. As for Dr. Blair and Dr. Erskine, Peter Thomson 'only saw' them. Both were disabled by advanced age ; and the one could but attempt now and then, in a few broken words, to urge his people to hold fast the precious doctrine of his former ministrations, as he could teach and warn them no more, and was merely waiting to give in his 'account ;'

and the other was tasking all his remaining strength to rub a little more of the rhetorical polish which 'his soul loved' into some manuscript sermons that were about to go to press, to form a supplemental fifth to the four volumes of sermons which he had formerly published with unprecedented *éclat*, but in all of which there was too little of the gospel, with nothing whatever of genius or of high intellectual energy. Dr. Finlayson was now the leading city preacher belonging to the Establishment; and not only as his Professor in Logic, but as distinguished, in the pulpit, for a freshness, order, and vigour of thought, and a persuasive yet nervous eloquence which Blair never exemplified, the student listened to him with interest and admiration, though he must have been aware of the imperfect development of the preacher's evangelical views. The BURGHES SECESSION, to which the Coldstream family belonged, had at this time only three ministers in Edinburgh; but two of these—Messrs. (afterwards Drs.) Hall and Peddie—were greatly distinguished,—the former for his oratory, which was at once graceful and powerful, and the latter for a much nobler and more potent set of mental qualifications, associated, however, with an organ of more homely and less fluent and rousing utterance. The two had very large and enthusiastic audiences, including troops of students who were eager for hints and lessons that should be available for their future practice in the pulpit. In the other non-established denominations some preachers of note were appearing; but we must not, at this stage, refer more particularly to the various city preachers, of whom Adam Thomson received stimulating descriptions, since he soon had the opportunity of hearing and judging them for himself. Those descriptions, enlivened by such personal anecdotes as students pick up and retail, strengthened his zeal both for learning and for its pastoral application.

He resumed his long-interrupted acquaintance with the Latin language; and though at first he was greatly mortified to

find how much he had forgotten, he was soon glad at the ease with which he not only recovered all that had been lost, but also surmounted old and new difficulties. With his riper faculties, and his more concentrated and persistent powers of application, he could, at the age of sixteen, advance steadily, rapidly, and pleasantly, where, at the age of seven, he had stumbled at almost every little step. His progress interested and astonished his teacher, Mr. M'Lean, who, whilst insisting on the accuracy and thoroughness of all his acquisitions, interposed no check upon their extent, but encouraged him to undertake the longest lessons that he could really master and retain. He was not put into a class to run with a slow-going 'team,' that would take from five to seven years to creep through the Latin books read at school ; but he was allowed to make all the speed he could, unimpeded by any companions. It was fortunate for him that he was under the charge of such a teacher as Mr. M'Lean, who would have restricted his daily task to a single line, if his eager pupil had failed to understand every word in it, but who, on the other hand, would have given him leave to go through a whole volume as merely one lesson, if he knew it thoroughly. Nor was it by following some new and specially 'short cut,' but by putting forth all his energy and perseverance along the common highway of learning, that he was soon far ahead. The labour of translating from the Roman classics became a delight not less than a discipline. As he shifted the words and the clauses out of their textual order, to suit an English version, both their original collocation and their subsequent transposition became less puzzling ; and as he evolved their meanings with due point and precision, he could not but admire the language, and its capabilities for commemorating heroic deeds, and expressing sublime ideas and sentiments. When he advanced from the historical writings of Nepos, Cæsar, Sallust, and Livy, to the poetry of Ovid and Virgil, he came into close contact with the

classic mythology ; and this was fitted to stir his zeal for Christianity, as the one thing needful for the whole world, not less powerfully than the most vivid picture of modern heathenism in all its aspects and tendencies. A young Christian, aspiring to the pulpit, might draw stronger impulses to 'magnify his office' from that mythology which represented the worse than vain searchings after God by the most civilised races and ages, and their wisest leaders, than from all the reports of the religious condition of the Gentile world that have been sent home by missionary explorers. That mythology showed him how true, beyond all possibility of doubt, was the apostle's declaration, that 'the world by wisdom knew not God.' The religious views cherished by the master spirits of Greece and Rome were worse than fantastic—they were monstrous, loathsome, and polluting ; and, as Plutarch justly remarked, it would have been less calumnious and offensive to the Supreme Being to *deny* than to *worship* such gods as theirs ! That the Hebrew people alone should be possessed of the true theology, would have been inexplicable and impossible, if it had not been committed to and preserved amongst them by a special divine intervention ; for both their native and their naturally acquired 'wisdom' would have failed as deplorably in discovering the true God, as the 'wisdom' of Greece and Rome. The classic mythology survives as the grand 'folly' of the cultivated human intellect engaged in building up a religion ; and in contrast with the 'foolishness of preaching,' it has impressive lessons for all who are under training for the latter function. It is the tower of Babel compared, as a refuge, with Noah's ark.

When Adam Thomson was entering upon the last quarter of the year which he had ardently devoted to Latin studies, his teacher announced, that in these he had made such progress, that he would be ready to enter college in the approaching session ; and urged him to labour, in the interval, at acquiring the rudiments of the Greek language. Parish schools were in

the habit of giving—even to those of their classical pupils who were far advanced in Latin, and were preparing for college—a very slight acquaintance with the elements of Greek ; hence, when those pupils entered college, the Greek professor had the drudgery of guiding them slowly through the grammar, and the first session was occupied with his laying those foundations that should have been laid at school. In too many cases little more of Greek was obtained at college than should have been possessed before leaving school ; and through life, Greek literature remained a treasure that was locked up from those who could freely enjoy the literature of Rome.

Adam Thomson applied himself to Greek with the diligence which he had shown in Latin, and with equal success. When the school broke up for the harvest holidays, he neither paused nor relaxed in his preparations for college. He was under no taskmaster, but he imposed upon himself longer daily lessons in Latin and Greek than he had ever attempted at school. During August and September, he was deprived of the encouragement and help which his brother's presence afforded, as Peter was then attending the Divinity Hall at Selkirk for the first time ; yet, in the absence of all superintendence and aid from his teacher and his elder brother, he exacted more from his own energies and resources, and found that these grew and availed him the more that they were tried and trusted. Afterwards, it was often a matter of regret to both brothers, that the long 'start' in the course of liberal education which the elder had obtained through the protracted ill health of the younger, prevented them from *studying together* either at the University or at the Divinity Hall. They were kept apart, for the door that opened to the one coming in, had just closed behind the other going away. Peter left college immediately before Adam entered ; and at the Divinity Hall, the first session of the one came exactly after the last session of the other. In the beginning of October, Peter had returned

home from his initiatory session at Selkirk as a divinity student, fresh from his encampment amid the exquisite scenery of that romantic district, where, too, were concentrated for the time the charms of frank intercourse with so many fellow-students, and of friendship's more delightful communion with a select group, and the grand attraction of the study of theology ; and full of the wise and genial sayings of Dr. Lawson, and eager to communicate to Adam the solemn impressions about the ministerial office, and the relations of learning to it, which he had received from that best of tutors, and which were not more seasonable for himself who had reached the Divinity Hall, than for his younger brother who was entering the college.

Adam had nearly completed his seventeenth year, when, in the first week of November 1796, he set out for Edinburgh, to study at the University. He was now of a sounder and more hardy frame than he had known for several years ; for, having recovered not only from his long-continued illness, but also from any constitutional delicacy or local debility which that illness might have permanently entailed, he had laid aside the crutches ; and the only trace of his former disablement was a stiff knee-joint, which slightly moderated the length and the speed of his step, but indicated no weakness of limb, and placed no check upon the most varied and incessant activity. He was wont to tell in his old age, when referring to the period of his going to college, how, on the morning of his departure from Coldstream, his father introduced him to a stranger whom they found ready for the same journey, and seated in the conveyance. The intending student looked much younger than he really was ; and perhaps the stranger, noticing his boyish appearance, which would bear the tokens of sadness at parting from all at home, and of shyness to meet none but unfamiliar faces, expressed some surprise or concern that one so young should, unattended, take so long a journey. The father, too, may at the moment have been led to think more of the tender

care and nurture which the boy had needed for several years, than of the sturdy self-reliance which he had recently developed, and which would more than suffice for a day's lonely travelling. Certainly a youth might claim compassion, less for the hardships and trials of his unattended journey to Edinburgh, than for those of his subsequent residence for six months in that city, aloof from family and from all friendly guardianship. His travelling alone to the metropolis was, either as a danger or as a trial, little compared with his living alone there for half a year. His father, however, frankly bespoke the stranger's interest and kindness for his young fellow-traveller, entreating that he would 'look after' Adam during the tedious journey, and adding the words which the son never forgot, 'He is lame, and has lately lost his mother!'

The 'conveyance' provided for them was not a stage coach, for many years had to pass before coaches were put upon this road; it was no other than the 'carrier's cart,' which took the best part of a day, from morning to morning, to go from Coldstream to Edinburgh, with a short evening 'rest' at a half-way house before facing the blasts on Soutra Hill. The passenger could not complain, as railway travellers now do, that the outlines and features of the country were dashed into each other, and flashed confusedly upon his eye, through the speed of the conveyance; but he had ample time to note the scenes and objects that skirted the road, whilst the landscapes of moorland, forest, or hill that retreated to the distant background, seemed as if they never would pass away from his eye! If he were free to be a close observer, his mind might have caught distinct photographic pictures of the districts travelled through. But a youth leaving home for college life, amidst strange faces, is too much engrossed with a tumult of uneasy thoughts and sentiments about the past, and of mixed expectations of the future, to devote himself to the study of scenery. For him there is no spell in the way itself; but his heart is

with what lies at *each of the extremities*—his father's house at the one, and the seat of learning at the other; and the intermediate scenery and its charms are lost upon him.

This was the first long journey of one who was destined, more than his clerical brethren, to be 'in journeyings oft,' though this excursiveness did not prevent him from being also 'in labours more abundant.' That first journey, too, was on a road which he more frequently travelled than any other—the road between his border home and Edinburgh. Many hundred times in the course of his ministerial life did he pass along it, in many kinds of vehicle (previous to the monopolizing railway train), at all seasons of the year, under a great diversity of ruling impulses, and for the advocacy of many a public question. He was familiar with its every hill, level, and bend; and though a bare turnpike, it was rich to him in associations and memories; and of these not the least distinct and interesting were the earliest—those that related to his first college journey in 1796.

CHAPTER II.

COLLEGE AND DIVINITY HALL STUDIES.

(1796—1804.)



AXTER'S CLOSE, in the Lawnmarket, has ceased to be a favourite locality for students in search of lodgings, and seems to be deserted by the very humblest of the class; but in 1796 it was chosen by not a few; and *there*, where every 'flat' showed its row of oval tickets offering quarters, in one of the households Adam Thomson and two fellow-students were accommodated. The sitting-room which the three jointly used, had a more select and memorable distinction than that of harbouring students. It had been occupied by ROBERT BURNS for some months during his first sojourn in the Scottish capital, when all its circles of fashion and literature hastened to acknowledge his wondrous powers of song and speech, and gave him such an ovation as prepared ludicrously for the post of 'exciseman' to which they raised him. Scarcely ten years had elapsed since Burns came to reside in the room where the three lads sat at their college-tasks; yet this brief term sufficed to introduce and establish his name, as the national poet, within every home in broad Scotland, and also to withdraw his manly presence from the land of the living; and the rapid triumphs of his genius, and his premature death in the bygone summer (1796), invested that room with a peculiar interest. Since he was *there*, how had he engrossed the thoughts and sympathies, and moved the laughter and the tears, of all classes of his

countrymen ! But the 'decade,' so fraught with his glory, closes tragically over his new-made grave.

Before visiting Edinburgh in 1786, the poet was only known where any of the 600 copies of his 'maiden' volume—recently printed at Kilmarnock—had circulated ; and when he reached the city 'without a single note of introduction,' he was thankful to meet with an old Mauchline acquaintance—a writer's apprentice—who offered him a share of his humble apartment in Baxter's Close. *There* he continued to lodge for some months, though in a few days the obscure peasant poet of Ayrshire became 'the observed of all observers,' the only 'lion' of the season, the social 'prodigy,' that was welcomed into every brilliant assembly and select party in the city, to astonish all the representatives of rank, fashion, and literature, by the propriety, yet perfect manliness and ease, of his bearing, and the unrivalled wit and eloquence of his conversation. From that room in Baxter's Close he daily sallied forth to call at the most princely residences in Edinburgh, and to be a welcome guest at their splendid hospitalities ; and he nightly returned from magnificent entertainments that had also been crowned by 'the feast of reason and the flow of soul,' to his own dull lodging, and to the company of the writer's apprentice. He was afterwards induced to remove to the more fashionable quarters of Nicol of the High School, whose society might be more stimulating, but was far less safe, than the clerk's. Baxter's Close was henceforth cut off from the close relations in which it had stood to the rank and learning of the city for several weeks. It was henceforth to see Burns no more ; but the memory of such an intense and energetic personality as his—when associated with genius—was sure to haunt the place.

The fact of Burns having lodged there, was in 1796 (a few months after his death) paraded by the landlady in the front of her recommendations of the apartment ; and probably she

remembered it in the weekly *rent* which she fixed—taking value for the honour. She had hung up a cheap likeness of the poet as a testimonial of his former presence, and as a text from which she might deliver her promiscuous store of reminiscences and traditions about him to the privileged students. Adam Thomson, however, was not so fully under the spell of local association, as to believe that the room in which he and his two companions conducted their studies, was large, airy, and well-lighted. He regarded it, in spite of all the attractions it had received from Burns, as ‘a dingy hole,’ where he anticipated no little mortification for himself in being visited during the winter by any of his Border friends—even though he could boast of entertaining them in the national poet’s ‘city garret!’ He regretted that, along with this fascination for the mind, it possessed so little that was pleasant to the eye, or that could make a lodger comfortable and his visitors cheerful. But, at that time, winter quarters for students in Edinburgh lay generally in five or six *strata* of populous ‘flats,’ within a very narrow radius of streets around the College, instead of being, as now, distributed over the whole extent of the city’s modern growth; and the majority of them were not more inviting than the lodgings in Baxter’s Close. Like many of the Secession students and ministers of that date, Adam Thomson possessed a very limited knowledge of, and sympathy with, what was brightest and noblest in the character and poetry of Robert Burns, and had heard more than enough of the grosser elements and accidents, as well as of the satirical pieces, in which, to please some ‘Moderate’ and untheological clergy of his acquaintance, the poet caricatured and railed at various friends of evangelical religion, and treated these with far more egregious misrepresentation and injustice than the same classes were ever guilty of against himself. Still, Adam was far from being insensible to the local spell. The room in which he and his companions

studied did often remind them of the poet's strong and deeply marked personality ; and some of his effusions, or an emphatic line or two, were as vividly suggested, as if he had been there once again to repeat them with his old rapture. As, in the midst of their classical lessons, they raised their eyes to the bard's portrait, they could not fail to remember his contemptuous verses on the vanity of a college-course for many who pass through it, and in whose head the lack of brains was not compensated for by the addition of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew tongues to their native member. The prolific fancies, however, of the youthful lodgers would be naturally more engrossed with the various impassioned moods of the poet—such as possessed him when he returned from the gay social gatherings of the city, and from the blandishments and applauses showered on him there by the proud and the fair, to his quarters in Baxter's Close, which more closely resembled Mossgiel, and to the criticism of his own modest judgment. How often had he entered that room—elated with the consciousness of having achieved, by his poetry, wit, and eloquence, as clear a pre-eminence in the upper circles, as he had ever enjoyed in the midst of his rustic compeers ! and that consciousness might occasionally be piquant with the memory of having defeated and humbled a philosopher fluent in 'the jargon of the schools,' or some 'birkie ca'd a lord,' who ventured to play with and upon the ploughman, whilst in gentler chivalry he had by his talk 'carried duchesses off their feet.' How often had he entered that room, full of the still more thrilling anticipations of a fame which the whole country and all future ages should accord ! But how often, too, had he entered—disappointed, depressed, desponding, and fiercely self-reproachful—ready to say of the attentions and praises of the great, that they were 'all vanity and vexation of spirit,'—meaning nothing and leading to nothing, and that they kept him away from his plough and his Muse ! Would

he not in this mood astonish Richmond, the writer's clerk, with his invectives against his fashionable friends, and against his own infatuation? Still more violent was the reaction in the poet's mind after scenes of riot with 'fast' companions; and then in that room he suffered keener torture than was known in any Romish cell of penance. There was such an exuberance of manhood in his personality, that these and other impassioned moods which ruled him, when dwelling there ten years before, were evolved by local association—as if in pictures on the walls—to the sympathy of the student lodgers there. Burns had still a 'share' of that room; and we believe that Adam Thomson thought and spoke more about the poet in the winter of 1796, than he did during the entire remainder of his life, when his reading and study of poetry kept aloof from the strictly *modern* stock—with the exception of Cowper's productions.

The year in which the subject of our memoir entered the Edinburgh University, was that in which four or five young men, pre-eminent for talent and culture, energy and ambition, and destined afterwards to shine in the nation's high places, were preparing to leave the same 'Alma Mater.' Foremost in that distinguished band was HENRY BROUGHAM, who has—since then—completed a *seventy years' course of manhood*, and into this unusual 'length of days' has crowded a still more extraordinary number of mighty achievements, the most of which, though performed in the law courts, or in both Houses of Parliament, or in the halls of some scientific congress, or on the platform of a public meeting, were marked by pure beneficence to his fellow-countrymen and to his fellow-men; whilst *the weapon* with which he conquered will ever be preserved, and his *irresistible eloquence* will be constantly studied—not less to stimulate patriotism and philanthropy, than to train oratory. Of all the great men whose intense, vehement, and unrested toil foreboded a speedy consumption and exhaustion

of vital energy, Brougham was by far the most likely; yet seventy years of high-pressure toil—carried on with the brain on a tension, and the heart in a passion—must have husbanded and cherished the life which they were fitted to destroy early; and he is now at the patriarchal age of *ninety*—as if all the days of the years of his lot had been easy and festive! He is in 1867 Chancellor of the University which first drew forth the promise of his future greatness, and which he—along with his brilliant associates—left at the close of the session of 1796–7.

These distinguished students were then unknown to Adam Thomson, as their last was his first session; and none of his own college contemporaries attained to the celebrity of their predecessors. Still, some of those who went through the classes with him, and were among his personal friends, possessed energies which were only braced by difficulties and discouragements, and a perseverance which would not relax until their object was gained. They were, however, much less conspicuous at college than in after-life. Among them were David Brewster, whose scientific discoveries have given him the title of knight and a European name, and raised him to an official post in his university only inferior to Lord Brougham's; and George Dunbar, who was early promoted to the Greek professorship, which he held for well-nigh half a century in the same University. With the latter Adam was in very close companionship; and they were wont to rehearse their lessons together in the Baxter's Close room, the future professor plodding on through Greek particles and polysyllables in defiance of all the scornful verses and glances of Robert Burns.

The classes attended in the opening session were—as they still are—the Latin and the Greek. The former is called in Scotland the 'Humanity' Class. The various branches of study that constitute the Faculty of Arts have been regarded as of a *humanizing* tendency; and Latin, from being generally the first that is taken, has appropriated to itself the credit of

that tendency, though it cannot pretend either to a larger or a purer share of it than any of the associated branches—Greek, Logic, Mathematics, or Moral, Mental, or Physical Science; and each of these might as justly have monopolized the distinction. The Latin class was then taught by Dr. Hill, a superior scholar, but far less accomplished and successful as a teacher. To render his tuition still more ‘humanizing,’ he made frequent digressions into the rich domain of English literature, thence selecting parallel passages in illustration of choice Roman ones, and indulging in comparative criticism upon their merits; yet somehow he failed to engage the attention of his pupils, who reckoned such prelections frivolous and tedious, and who viewed his zeal in endeavouring to make them subtle critics before they had become plain readers. as—to borrow a familiar expression of his own—‘unavailing pother.’ He fancied that he had obtained some precious illumination on the *Latin prepositions*, enabling him to construct what he called ‘the philosophy of prepositions;’ and the delight which he took in expounding this was scarcely more intense than the impatience of his hearers. The three ‘a, ab, abs,’ were dear to his pedantic heart, and he could not meet with them singly or in ‘tandem’ order, without mounting the hobbies, and launching into an interminable discourse on their virtue and beauty, and on the ‘ten’ different meanings which he had discovered in each of them, though in the rival preposition ‘ad’ he saw no fewer than ‘sixteen!’ He had great stores of learning, but showed little judgment in dispensing out of these to his pupils, who, when they should have been receiving solid instruction and systematic guidance, were often entertained with dull essays on nice points and vexed questions—a diet of nut-shells; and none of the students, if eager after progress, could ascribe their enthusiasm to his inspiring influence. The class was without discipline—the wild boys from the High School being the only *masters*; and

their tricks of fun and mischief could scarcely have been more frequent and daring, if the Chair had been vacant. Adam Thomson was, of his own accord, so bent upon Latin scholarship, that he was neither discouraged nor rendered indifferent and indolent by the Professor's loose and inanimate style of tuition. Throughout his long life, he kept up his familiarity with Latin, which he read with peculiar ease and accuracy.

The Greek class was at the same period most admirably conducted by Professor Dalzel—the most brilliant of scholars, and the most devoted, energetic, and genial of teachers. Lord Cockburn, in his *Memorials of his Times*, does not exaggerate when he describes Dalzel as ‘mild, affectionate, simple; an absolute enthusiast about learning—*particularly classical, and especially Greek*—with an innocence of soul and of manner which imparted an air of honest kindness to whatever he said or did.’ Whilst he delighted to have scholars who could follow wherever he led, and who could sympathize with his raptures over Greek poetry and philosophy, he was not less ardent and patient in his attempts to drill tyros in the elements of the grammar, and would listen as earnestly and with as kind a smile of commendation to the latter repeating slowly the cases of a noun, as to the former giving an elegant translation of some favourite passage in Plato. He incited most of his pupils to diligence; to some he communicated a large portion of his own enthusiasm; but a still more general and certain issue was, that he attracted towards himself the love and esteem of all. How strongly Adam Thomson was drawn to the Greek language and its Professor, may be judged from the fact, that he attended Dalzel's classes during *four* complete sessions, three of these being taken consecutively, and the remaining one in 1802, when he was near the close of his theological studies. He was then led through a varied course of Greek literature; yet this he valued chiefly as afford-

ing him a critical knowledge of the original language of the New Testament ; and that knowledge grew and was constantly available throughout his ministerial life.

Edinburgh Professors of that day awarded no medals or books as prizes to stimulate students into occasional competition ; but the word '*bene*,' with its many modifications towards the right hand of 'excellence,' and the left hand of 'short-comings,' formed the only tribute that might be expected. In some of the classes, essays were required ; and the special honour bestowed on the best of these was, that their authors not only read them before their class-fellows, but also read them from the Professor's chair.

Though Adam Thomson diligently prosecuted his classical studies, and profited greatly from the instructions of Professor Dalzel, he soon found that Logic, Metaphysics, and Moral Philosophy—as expounded by Dr. Finlayson and the celebrated Dugald Stewart—were much more influential in enlarging his intellect, and in developing and training its various faculties. Finlayson might have no new theories or original views ; but those which he adopted in the course of his 'eclectic' investigation, he made still further his own, by independent correction and modification, as well as by clear interpretation and striking illustration ; and he aimed at opening up and cultivating the minds of his pupils by means of philosophy, not less than at evolving the principles of philosophy. If he could get the young men to philosophize and reason well, he would have been more satisfied than if he had introduced a new system either of metaphysics or of logic. His surpassing merits as a teacher were gratefully remembered by such students as Adam Thomson, whose mental powers he first stirred into earnest energy and regulated activity ; and they have been exquisitely delineated by his biographer, Dugald Stewart.

In his third college-session, when he entered Dugald Stewart's Moral Philosophy class, he came under a still more

majestic and fascinating eloquence ; and never through his long life did he either lose or lower his admiration of its grand yet easy magic. In that class there were neither regular nor occasional hours of examination ; and the whole business consisted in the Professor's lecturing, and in the students' listening to him, for an hour daily. This monologue, if pronounced by one of the dull and dry lecturers whom other universities have seen in their Chair of Moral Science, would have been an uninterrupted penance ; but with Dugald Stewart in the Chair, it was an hour of hushed silence—the students eagerly catching every word of his, and only regretting that he ceased speaking before their interest or their delight was abated. Many distinguished strangers, as well as some of the principal citizens, were attracted to the class-room, where—in listening to his eloquence—they displayed as great an enthusiasm as that of the students who sat beside them.

Yet his lectures were wholly unwritten, and so far as their language was concerned, quite extempore, and fresh as the hour which drew them forth. He spoke on the most profound subjects and subtle questions with unhesitating fluency—all his ideas passing swiftly into choice forms of forcible and graceful expression, and these floating upon the breath of a richly melodious voice and in the radiance of his fine face ; whilst each of his many definitions had the precision and felicity which seemed to result from a prolonged study, and his illustrations had a beauty and delicacy that might have required the slow hand and frequent touches of elaborate rhetoric, under the revision of scrupulous taste ; and every simile, flashing forth at the close of a paragraph, to add gleams of intense illumination to the clear daylight of his meaning, looked as if it could only have been produced in a highly *electric* mood of the intellect, and not in its everyday state ! His extempore speaking might not 'smell' of the oil in his lamp, and of labour in strict seclusion ; yet it did appear to give evidence of the

protracted toil of composition in the open air : it had all the charms of that successful art which conceals itself. In reality, however, there had been no labour whatever, nor even the process of composition, so far as the *words* were concerned : his tongue articulated the words and framed the clauses and sentences which his *pen* had never traced ; and yet the chance medley of words was full of such an exquisite beauty and felicity as would have rewarded the most careful premeditation. Such personal peculiarities as a very slight huskiness of voice and a perceptible ‘burr,’ did not render his delivery less effective or pleasant ; and none who heard him ever doubted that he was in the first class of orators, though he had received no special training, and had, indeed, given himself no other practice in public speaking than his academical lecturing afforded. Many friends, knowing his rare endowments of brilliant and ready speech, and his acquirements in the science and history of politics, as well as his large-hearted patriotism and zeal for civil and religious liberty, were eager to see him in the British senate ; but the chances of a Scotch Professor gaining in the House of Commons high distinction for eloquence, were left to be tried at a much later period by Sir Daniel Sandford, who—in intellectual and oratorical qualities, and in wisdom, tact, and modesty—was hopelessly inferior to Dugald Stewart !

Among the young men who attended the instructions of this famous guide in philosophy, there were a few scions of the English aristocracy, that subsequently rose to the highest places, both in the Parliament and in the Government ; and they often acknowledged that Dugald Stewart had been the model-speaker, whose eloquence had *first* fascinated them, and aroused their emulation in the noble art of persuasion, and that though he had been their earliest model, they had never in the long course of their experience met with one who could be accounted his superior. They confessed, too, that from his lectures they had derived comprehensive views

which directed their future legislative policy ; and sound principles, maxims, and lessons, which entered largely into the formation of their character as statesmen. Prime Ministers like Palmerston and Russell, have owned themselves deeply indebted to the example and teaching of the Edinburgh Professor ; and not a few other senators, who came as far short of those two in State-place and power as they surpassed them in oratory, were equally grateful to the same transcendent master, whose very ‘spitting’ Lord Cockburn regarded as ‘eloquent !’ Those politicians had also been impressed with such views of his upon man’s nature, as solicited their quiet meditation in intervals of relaxation from State-cares, party-strife, and struggles after individual promotion, and showed them how grandly on all sides Philosophy stretches beyond the sphere of the most comprehensive politics, and how little there is of Man that is enclosed within State-accountabilities.

Many belonging to the humbler grades of average Scotch students, who afterwards became lawyers or clergymen, were far more frequent, and by no means less earnest, in their professions of obligation, both to the Stewart eloquence, and to the wisdom which it conveyed so attractively and memorably. With ministers in particular, it was common for them—when drawn together at Presbytery or Synod meetings, or on sacramental occasions—to indulge in reminiscences of their college-days ; and the brightest of these memories encircled the name of Dugald Stewart. They contended against younger brethren, who spoke of his brilliant successors, Brown and Wilson, that these instructors could not bring Philosophy home to the consciousness and sympathies of pupils with such an irresistible charm as had invariably attended *his* exposition.

Adam Thomson, from the day he entered the class down to the close of life, yielded to none in admiration of Stewart, and in gratitude for the many important benefits which his lectures had conferred. He was glad that he had not been deterred

from attending him by certain reports within circles both of the Secession and the Established clergy—that the Professor was tainted with a scepticism which was practically as dangerous as Hume's, and that, in his lecturing, he not only treated Christian morality as a grand 'impertinence' in any ethical system, but insinuated doubts as to the origin and claims of Christianity. This would have been worse than a 'fly in the ointment;' it would have been 'death in the pot;' and there were others besides Mr. Brown of Whitburn who interdicted their sons from becoming his pupils. There was at the time a wide-spread notion, which Established Presbyteries laboured to encourage, that the various art-classes—especially those of science and philosophy—could be safely conducted by clergymen alone, and that lay professors were at best questionable guides. Hence, Reverends monopolized many of the Arts, as well as all the Divinity, Chairs, in order that no infidel tendencies might enter into the training of students. Adam Thomson, however, rejoiced to find that Stewart's teaching was wholly free from antichristian ingredients, though—to his regret—it was also marked by the absence of the purely evangelical elements which might have been introduced. It was left to other studies to supply what was wanting; and it was much that nothing sceptical had been insinuated, to vitiate what had been given, and to nullify the future supplement. Scepticism in the Professor would have filled the blank spaces with principles that must have both poisoned the philosophy imparted, and also been fatal to the Christian growth which was soon to be superadded with the view of forming Christian Philosophy. But our student never heard a word from the Moral Philosophy Chair, that could be construed into a challenge of evangelical truth; and afterwards, whenever the report about scepticism in Stewart's lectures was revived in his presence, he promptly and emphatically denounced its utter groundlessness. Whilst vindicating, however, the untainted

character of those lectures, he complained with increasing regret that they had not been illuminated by Revelation, nor enriched by its supernatural discoveries regarding man's nature, relations, and destinies. From a misconception of the proper privileges of a philosopher, and fancying himself interdicted from employing any other means of knowing man than those which man—in his consciousness and reason—furnishes, the lecturer chose to inquire and speculate under the dim and uncertain 'light of nature,' rather than under 'the day-spring from on high' which Christ introduced; and this enormously disadvantageous restriction upon his aids to a genuine knowledge of man, it is not less absurd for a philosopher to impose upon himself, than it would be for the human sinner to reject the Christian salvation, because it had neither been provided nor revealed by his native faculties! He would not be intruding into the theologian's peculiar province, nor stealing the theologian's light; since the philosopher not only *may*, but *should*, go wherever God's light and truth invite; and in the case of a moral philosopher, these have rather sought him and solicited his appropriation. Yet, when speculating on a question of such transcendent interest as *a future state for man*, Dugald Stewart voluntarily placed himself in the deep and dreary twilight in which Socrates and the wisest of the ancients could only wish and hope, but did not dare to believe, that there would be a sort of shadowy existence for the dead; whilst he might have enjoyed the light proceeding from the private 'door opened in heaven' to receive Enoch and Elijah, and the far greater effulgence issuing from the very 'gates' of heaven, when Jesus Christ 'ascended up on high, leading captivity captive,' and giving the fullest assurance of immortality for the souls, and of restored, beautified, and perpetual youth for the bodies, of all His followers! There was not a theme on which he was sure to expatiate with more lofty and entrancing eloquence, than on the creatures of a day

being heirs of immortality; but if, instead of confining himself to the feeble evidences furnished by weakened and disordered human reason, he had taken advantage of Revelation and its precious light on this subject, how much grander and more impressive his discoursing would have become, as it swept over the glorious prospects of endless existence! Such darkness as he liked to be surrounded by in the midst of his moral inquiries and musings, reduced his vision to the narrowest range, and confused its scenes and objects; whilst the daylight which he ought to have thankfully preferred, would have disclosed 'a new heaven and a new earth,' stretching beyond limits, and suggesting those 'thoughts which wander through eternity,' and to which Stewart could have given a surpassingly majestic expression. Still, according to the test, that whatever 'is not *against* Christ is *for* Him,' the teaching of Stewart, being wholly without qualities that were hostile or hurtful to Christianity, might be regarded as friendly. Certainly, it was full of passionate devotion to such 'things' as were 'true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report;' and these were rendered intensely fascinating to, and influential over, many pupils, as may be inferred from the declaration of Sir James Macintosh, that Stewart 'breathed the love of virtue into whole generations of pupils,' his charming advocacy being enforced and illustrated by all that was known of his personal example. Unfortunately, the few instructors in Moral Science, who sought to frame a system that should harmonize both with Revelation and the light of Nature, have proved themselves better theologians than philosophers. If they had been successful in developing the outlines and features of an adequate theory, they would, we believe, have also succeeded in christianizing it; but their failure in the former process makes the latter faulty, and the result cannot be called Christian *philosophy*. The Christian baptism might have been perfectly valid, involving even regeneration; but

then it was not a philosophically constructed system which they baptized; and students, seeking for such a system of Moral Philosophy, will not find it in the writings of Paley (whose theology was not less defective than his philosophy), or in the far more evangelical lectures of Wardlaw, Dewar, and Chalmers.

Stewart's views can easily be gathered from his 'Works;' but his college expositions and illustrations have passed away with his pupils—all of them being unwritten. He gave also two courses of lectures on *Political Economy*,—a science which ought to have had a University Chair entirely devoted to it, but which was arbitrarily, though almost but nominally, assigned to the Moral Professor, who, down to the present day, has seldom attempted to teach it. The first course, however, was delivered a few years *previous* to Adam Thomson's Moral Philosophy session; and the second was delivered as many years *after* that session, and thus he was deprived of the privilege of attending those lectures, which were described by all that heard them as not less masterly and eloquent than those he was wont to give on morals. There was intense excitement in various circles outside the college, regarding those occasional prelections, for Stewart was an ardent Liberal; and the representatives of that Tory despotism which hated and sought to extirpate every sympathy with the interests, rights, and liberties of 'the people,' waited and keenly watched for some incautious phrases, on the part of the lecturer, which might be construed into 'sedition' or 'treason.' Discoursing extempore, he might easily have been betrayed into such expressions as the Pitt-Dundas spies and informers would reckon wicked and dangerous. The first course was delivered at the unusual hour of seven in the evening; and this innovation was held to signify, that the principles about to be advanced were—along with the party that championed them—lovers of the 'darkness and not of the light, because their

deeds were evil.' Before and after each lecture, and in the absence of the Professor, groups of students gathered eagerly around the large blazing fire beside the desk, to discuss the topics of the lecture; and Tory suspicions were aroused against those groups, as against secret democratic clubs. That first course of lectures was also contemporaneous with the 'Sedition Trials' of Muir, Palmer, Gerald, etc. etc.; and the shameful procedure and issue of these Government prosecutions showed how dangerous it then was in Scotland to indulge in even a very moderate freedom of political discussion. Judge BRAXFIELD revelled in such a licence of savage malignity against the mildest expression of Liberalism, as might have deterred Stewart from meddling with Political Economy. The judge flourished the 'rope' in the face of all advocates of political improvement, and assured them with brutal mirth, that they themselves would be much improved by 'a little hanging!' He did not scruple to say to one of the jurors (the father of the admirable Francis Horner) entering the box in Muir's case, 'Come awa', Maister Horner, come awa', and help us to hang ane o' thae—scoondrels;' and when another of the prisoners—Gerald—in defence of his reforming zeal, pled that 'even our Saviour Himself was a Reformer,' Braxfield perpetrated a profanity so shocking in the letter, yet so much more abominable in spirit, that it will be mentioned long after his name is forgotten: 'Muckle He made o' that—He was hanget.' It was amidst the excitement of such judicial incidents, and at a period when free speech on national affairs was all but suspended in Edinburgh, that Dugald Stewart came forward with his first course of lectures on Political Economy. His second course was delivered several years after, when free speech in politics continued to be rare and perilous. Adam Thomson could not attend the first, as he had not then entered college; and before the second was begun, he had left college, and was far advanced as a divinity

student. He was sensible of his loss in missing those lectures of his favourite University Professor ; and during the considerable interval between the two courses, they were frequently spoken of, and their principles and views closely discussed, among the Moral Philosophy students, who admired his boldness and sympathized with his Liberalism,—none, indeed, more so than the subject of this Memoir, who henceforth took a keen interest in the progress of Political Reform, slow, and in the face of mighty and desperate opposition, though it was. Many years had to pass before he could see the grasp of monopoly begin to loosen ; and then he was called to exercise patience as each finger was forced and kept open successively, until the whole hand unlocked itself and yielded up—to the general good—the stolen rights, privileges, and interests which had been too long appropriated to the aggrandizement of a few.

All his recollections and impressions of the eloquent philosopher had a vividness and depth indicating that the stamp had been struck upon the molten susceptibilities of youth. The Professor's face and figure—exactly as seen in the classroom—was recalled as distinctly as from yesterday's interview, by some college association. The noble forehead, to which baldness (that turns many heads into mere skulls) had given not only a severer cast of masculine power, but touches of exquisite beauty ; the grey eyes, shining and flashing under such ' shaggy canopies ' as would have hidden any ordinary lustre, yet, whether shining or flashing, they seemed to interpose depths of brightness between their grey colour and the spectator ; and the lips which, though rather large and heavy when not speaking, looked delicate and flexible as the ' vibrating string of Apollo's bow ' whenever they moved and sent forth their thrilling music ;—all those features, radiating forth in most significant looks, the thoughts and emotions which he was immediately to embody in language, were indelibly impressed

on Adam Thomson's memory. Sixty years afterwards, when reading Lord Cockburn's graphic and genial description of Dugald Stewart, he was inclined to discredit the peculiarity of 'weak limbs and appearance of feebleness in his gait and structure' ascribed to the philosopher, whom Cockburn had often seen in social and domestic scenes for a whole generation after he had known him as Professor. The only image of him in Adam Thomson's mind was that of the gowned Professor,—a stately figure apparently from top to toe, standing forth, fully inspired by, but with no trace of feverish excitement from, his theme, and discoursing with an energy which was checked and modified by perfect grace alone; and to that image neither 'weak limbs' nor general 'feebleness' belonged. These would have been concealed by the *gown*, or by the hour's animation which pervaded and renewed the whole man! So, too, with Dr. Finlayson, whom Lord Cockburn had seen on a memorable occasion in the General Assembly, as the chief framer and manager of the 'confederacy' against Leslie, and whose 'black, piercing, *Jesuitical* eyes' he had watched at the close of the voting which defeated him and his party. Cockburn ever remembered the look which Finlayson had turned upon Jeffrey, who rather flipantly suggested that the disappointed Moderate leader should take 'some gingerbread,'—a look interpreted into a wish to 'slap the face' of the sarcastic advocate! Adam Thomson had been familiar with Professor Finlayson's face, which had nearly as few expressions as his voice had tones. His voice was clear and strong, but had small variety of inflexion, and no melody; and his face had looks and meanings that were sufficiently plain and decisive, but within a most limited range. Both were admirably fitted for the teaching and ruling of the Logic class; and it was exclusively in this situation that Adam Thomson had observed Dr. Finlayson. The 'black, piercing eyes' had at once quelled the High School levity and mischief,

emerging triumphantly from the disorderly Latin class; and henceforth looked out upon a large gathering of pupils, who were docile as well as decent, and enthusiastic as well as attentive. Any 'Jesuitism' in the blunt glances and honest smiles of the Professor, was alike unknown and incredible to Adam Thomson, who was disposed to think either that Lord Cockburn had gratuitously ascribed this new double-dealing to Finlayson, or that Finlayson had been tempted—in the peculiar atmosphere which he breathed within the Moderate clubs and committees of the General Assembly—to acquire it!

Around those two Professors and their teaching his University associations were mainly wreathed. He knew that Finlayson had roused his mental powers, and showed him how to improve as well as how to exercise and rule them; and that Dugald Stewart, in dealing not only with the intellectual, but also with the emotional and moral nature, and with the faculties of imagination and taste, had directed him as to their use and invigoration in himself, and taught him how to operate upon them in others. He felt that Stewart had expounded *Rhetoric*, along with Moral Philosophy, the Professor's own eloquence illuminating his lessons. He always held that Stewart's lectures, whilst giving properly systematic and definite instructions on moral science, possessed also a general power of culture and refinement, and brought potent influences—as if from the whole Faculty of Arts—to bear upon the minds of his pupils. Adam Thomson received from him not only new impulses to the study of history and didactic literature, but new views to guide that study; and to the perusal of the great essayists—especially Addison and Johnson—he gave his utmost care, and ascribed many advantages. There were at the time no shoals of newspapers and magazines to distract young minds from becoming devoted to thoughtful books. Probably, during an entire session, a single broadsheet had not been in the hands of any Edinburgh

student, though the French Revolution was then hurrying through its horrors.

It was in the winter of Adam's attendance at the Moral Philosophy class, when he was full of Stewart's eloquence, that Edinburgh began to be stirred by the fame of a new pulpit orator, who did not come from England, but was a mere Scot, and who—more wonderful still—was a Seceder! This was *Struthers*, who had been recently settled over a *Relief* congregation in the city, and who—though belonging not only to a sect, but to a class of sects that met with general contempt and hatred—had attracted crowds of hearers and admirers from the nobility, gentry, and commonalty, and from every secular profession and trade, and every religious denomination. Classes and individuals, that had never before been represented in a 'meeting-house,' gathered frequently around him, to be thrilled with a Seceder's sermon, which they had hitherto only despised as full of the most vulgar ranting! All Edinburgh—its resident and occasional rank and fashion, its law dignitaries of every grade, its college professors, its doctors, its sceptics, and its stiff-necked Churchmen, lay and cleric—joined the crowds of Dissenters in rushing into Struthers' place of worship; and the fascination of his eloquence was not less upon the strangers who scorned everything about dissent, than upon his own people. Lord Cockburn describes him as being 'of our native Presbyterian *Seceders*, the only one in Edinburgh who was entitled to the praise of eloquence.' 'I know,' adds the same judge, 'no other person of the class who attracted people of good taste—not of his community—to his church, merely for the pleasure of hearing him preach. . . . As a pleasing, elegant preacher, he was far above any Presbyterian *Dissenter* then in Edinburgh.' Lord Cockburn is pleased, in the foregoing comparison, to leave out the *Established* clergy; and his silence seems to indicate that, in oratory, they were far above their Seceding brethren, and at least quite equal to

Struthers ! Struthers, however, would never have drawn the peculiar crowds, and the many notable individuals, that had no connection with or favour for, but the strongest prejudices against, Seceders, unless he had been far superior in eloquence to *Established* as well as to Seceding preachers in the city. Had the former been his equals, they would have kept from him all the hearers who were of rank and fashion, all who belonged to the Bench and the Bar ; and his fame and influence would have been immensely reduced. The truth was—as fixed by universal testimony—that Struthers had a clear pre-eminence over preachers of every denomination in Edinburgh, for force and grace of delivery. His congregation had not hidden his light under a bushel, or placed his church in a lane or back street. He preached in a spacious building that confronted the south side of the College ; and Dugald Stewart and the most distinguished of the Professors were often among his audience. It was a special novelty to see the Edinburgh of that day sitting at the feet of a Seceder ; it would also have been a mystery, but for the power of eloquence.

Struthers had neither the intellect nor the imagination of Edward Irving, who afterwards stirred London with not a little of the excitement which Edinburgh now felt, and happily he was quite free from Irving's extravagant ideas and wild speculations ; but he had a grander and more exquisitely graceful delivery than even Irving could display, as all who—like Adam Thomson—had often listened to both orators were constrained to acknowledge. Adam Thomson affirmed that he could not conceive of any utterance more perfect in power and beauty than that of Struthers. The preacher had been endowed with a voice of the greatest compass and of wonderful qualities. It had thunder-tones pealing and rolling, and clarion notes ringing out clearly ; whilst its lower keys were full of the richest melody—thrilling with pathos ; and he so managed its many and various inflexions, that, in each sermon,

there was nothing like chanting or recitation, but a most natural and irresistible specimen of *speaking* from the heart to the heart. That voice gave to familiar phrases and sentences a new vividness and emphasis of meaning, virtually making them *original*; and it so quickened and energized an inanimate composition, as to enable it to operate on the souls of hearers, not less rapidly and powerfully than if it had consisted of 'thoughts that breathe and words that burn.' That voice was not merely an echo—it was a creative energy, turning plainness into grandeur or beauty, impotence into force, death itself into life. This invaluable endowment of perfect utterance has somehow never been allowed to take a definite rank: it cannot be confounded with, or reduced to, *elocution*, and, on the other hand, it is universally held to be wholly different from and inferior to *genius*; yet both its effects, and its manner of producing these, go far to prove its close relationship to, if not its entire identity with, genius. If it impart to dull and dead clauses, sentences, and sermons, the peculiar influence over the souls of hearers, which genius—pervading those clauses, sentences, and sermons—would have exhibited, is not *kinship* established? How is it, too, that when such an arrangement of the melodious notes of the human voice as shall thrill the soul, and possess it with the intensest emotion, is traced upon paper, or poured forth in song, *genius* is ascribed both to the composer and to the vocalist? And yet, when those sounds of the voice are combined in *speaking*—even though it should be with far more entrancing and overpowering effects upon the hearer than ever attended the noblest music—the term 'genius' is interdicted, unless in the case of *actors*, who, alone among speakers, are complimented as 'men of genius,' for a skilful and impressive management of their voice! Nor is it more true of the speaker than of the musician or the tragedian, that—except in the memory of hearers—there are no traces left of the power he exercised.

The voice was Struthers' grand endowment ; and to know what he did with it, and what it did for him, you should have been in his place of worship, to see what individuals and classes formed the vast crowd, and to mark how he stirred and swayed them all. The gathering was, in one sense, the most select, and, in another, the most promiscuous that Edinburgh could exhibit. How people of rank and fashion were attracted, may be judged from the following conversation which a lady reported to Dr. Thomson. When visiting the family of Mr. Brydone, once well known as author of the *Tour through Sicily and Malta*, but now more frequently remembered as the son-in-law of Principal Robertson and the father of Lady Minto, she heard a gentleman ask Mr. Brydone if he had ever gone to Struthers' preaching. The reply was in the negative ; and this drew from the querist expressions of astonishment, and an assurance that 'to hear Struthers was as good as the best PLAY!' It is but just to this famous preacher to say, that whilst his 'delivery' was the 'first, second, and third' of his attractions, his matter was by no means meagre or vapid, but consisted of evangelical views and lessons, ably and justly exhibited, and clothed in elegant language ; and the many whom the voice fascinated, were responsible, if they slighted the message and were wholly engrossed with the messenger's musical utterance. If they turned a faithful gospel sermon, merely because it was admirably spoken, into a theatrical entertainment, the guilt of such infatuated folly lay with themselves ; and they that 'had ears to hear,' yet attended exclusively to the charming sounds, and forgot that they 'had souls to be saved,' could not have acted a more irrational part. They wilfully regarded an earnest Seceding preacher as their favourite stage-actor, simply because he spoke with remarkable power and grace !

From the time of his third session at College, Adam Thomson took many opportunities of hearing Struthers, and of being

impressed with his matchless delivery. He often spoke of his presence on one memorable occasion, which drew such crowds as could have filled the spacious church five or six times. The service was one of rejoicing over the victory at Trafalgar, just announced, and of mourning for the death of Nelson ; and the vast assembly, representing all social classes and grades, and all religious denominations, seemed to have forgotten that Struthers was a despised *Seceder*, and only expected that he would show himself a British orator ! Nor was this hope unfulfilled : the discourse grandly celebrated both the battle and the hero. The tones in which he repeated Nelson's last signal—'England expects every man to do his duty'—were long spoken of as the most electric and thrilling that could be imagined ; and many hearers declared that the most sublime and impassioned utterances of Shakespeare, expressed with all the tragic energy of a Siddons, a Kemble, or a Kean, were tame in comparison. Yet there was no vociferation ; and it was neither preceded by the start, nor followed by the pause, of theatric solemnity. At various stages of the sermon, and, in particular, when the preacher described the hero in that death-scene which will preserve the quarter-deck of the old ship, the 'Victory,' from being broken up, as long as the fibres in its planks hold together to show the spot where Nelson fell, the excess of emotions in the whole audience seemed to be above control ; yet there was always something in the look and tone of the preacher, to remind them that the hour was one of Sabbath, and that the place of hearing was a church, and to repress all audible sympathies. Struthers had the good sense and modesty to refuse all applications for a re-delivery of the *Trafalgar sermon*, and passed at once to other and less sensational subjects, without failing to attract crowded audiences. He drew the sceptical and apathetic men of letters in the city of Hume to consider the Old and New Testament heroes, as well as those that lived in modern times.

Adam Thomson, however, whilst receiving vivid delight and no little profit from his occasional attendance on Struthers' pulpit oratory, was always conscious of having derived deeper satisfaction, and far richer and more lasting advantages, from his regular waiting on the ministry of Dr. James Peddie, who, as a preacher, was not less sagacious, fresh, and original in matter, than simple and unadorned, yet inoffensive in manner. His delivery had nothing that was either very attractive or very commanding, and would have failed to 'set off' poor thinking, though disguised in much prettiness of fancy or of sentiment; yet, if it did not add to, neither did it detract from, the native force and beauty of his discourses. These had an unobtrusive majesty and grace from his imagination, which was so strictly under control, that many hearers and readers failed to note its quiet presence and operations, for it inspired and elevated his general intellectual energy, instead of projecting itself into separate manifestations. His representations of the character and history of Jesus Christ were radiant with the finest poetry of gospel truth,—such poetry as proceeds from that truth dwelling in an original mind.

Lord Cockburn has remarked that, at that period, Struthers was the only Dissenting preacher in Edinburgh who was qualified to interest those hearers who had taste and culture. Struthers was the only Seceder who was attractive or even tolerable beyond his own ecclesiastical denomination, and above the half-educated trading classes! His Lordship must have written in strange ignorance of the city preachers of his youth. There were then three—belonging to two of the Secession branches—who had no lack of gifts and accomplishments for addressing the most refined hearers that had souls to be saved and sanctified. As we name them—Dr. Hall, Dr. Peddie, and Dr. M'Crie—they need not shrink away, to hide themselves behind the very best and brightest of their *Established* contemporaries. Lord Cockburn, whilst overlook-

ing those three Secession luminaries, chooses to gaze in profound admiration upon two 'lesser lights' of the Establishment, Sir Harry Moncreiff and Dr. Inglis, whom he eulogizes as the noblest pulpit orators in the city, though probably for his Lordship's patronage the twain were indebted more to the *high legal standing of their sons*, than to the excellence of their own sermons! Unquestionably in all the qualities of preaching that could please and profit intellectual and educated hearers, Dr. Peddie was more than equal to the foremost of his Established brethren; and if the leaders of fashion, rank, and learning had 'condescended' to listen to this Seceding Doctor, they would have found as little in him to offend a just taste as they did in Struthers, and perhaps a great deal more to impress their rational and moral nature. At that time Dr. Peddie had come forward prominently to co-operate with zealous Evangelicals among the Established clergy of the city, in supporting the recently organized Missionary Society; and his great and versatile talents gave him as high a place and influence with his new associates as he had ever held with ministers of his own denomination. The speeches and sermons, delivered and published by Dr. Peddie, in promotion of that Society, were recognised by the community both of hearers and of readers as of surpassing excellence; and the Border student had a peculiar gratification in assenting to this public decision in honour of his own profoundly esteemed minister.

About the same time, too, this minister was brought out conspicuously in the 'New Light' controversy that agitated his own and other branches of the Secession, and that led to the development and dissemination of sound views about the Church's liberty and independence, and her purely spiritual government. The 'New Light' did not seek to *dominate*, it only asked to be *tolerated*. It did not thrust itself forward as a sunlight for the whole Church, but as a taper-light for a few tender consciences; and it related to a small and perfectly

logical and harmless inference from the fundamental principles of the Secession. But 'the darkness' (and vividly was the antagonistic party typified by *the darkness*, as representing ignorance, malignity, calumnious abuse, and 'all uncharitableness,') hated the Light, and bitterly denounced it—even as a private taper—in any of the manses and meeting-houses! No forbearance must be shown towards a single gleam; and both the gleam and the 'lamp' which shed it must be smothered as unworthy of the Secession Church, within which the same 'New Light' has since become a central and supreme luminary, with blessed effects! This extinguishing policy was urged by some zealots who clung to every 'jot and tittle' of the *Confession*—even in its dubious chapter on the magistrate and his power in and over the Church. Those zealots insisted that the 'New Light' should have no encouragement, not even the slightest toleration. Neither party imagined that the 'New Light' would dawn and brighten into the sacred principle of VOLUNTARIISM, which is now absolutely sure of a not distant triumph in all the British Churches. At its earliest day-spring, it had unanswerable arguments for its adoption, and self-evident reasons for its toleration; and the bigotry that fought against either, was logically imbecile, though it strove to compensate by means of excessive and venomous abuse. The action of the Burgher Synod, in reference to the disputed points, was wholly of a conciliatory character, and should have disarmed and satisfied the small minority that denounced every liberalizing innovation upon such clauses in the *Confession* as appeared to authorize the 'magistrate' to apply all the resources at his official disposal for the spread of religious truth, and for the suppression of heresy. Indeed, the 'Preamble' which the Synod adopted, had been composed and sanctioned by the very minority that afterwards so recklessly assailed it; and it simply declared that there should be forbearance on the points in dispute, and that no candidate for licence or ordination

should be required to signify the least approbation of, or agreement with, any clauses in the *Confession*, which might seem to teach persecuting principles, and the violent intervention of the magistrate on behalf of Christianity. It gave the 'New Light' no favour, not even a sanction ; it merely granted it *toleration*, and declared that—even supposing it to be error, and not truth—yet it was an error upon such a subordinate point, and of such a harmless character and consequence, that it should not be allowed to exclude all who held it from full communion with the Church. The 'Preamble' offered no encouragement to the large and influential party of progress that followed 'New Light ;' it merely put them on an impartial level with the small body of their opponents, and told both to live in harmony with each other.

During this keenly waged controversy, two pamphlets of extraordinary merit appeared. The first aimed at peace-making within the Secession brotherhood, and though it offered an unanswerable vindication of New Light principles, it asked for these, and for the overwhelming majority that supported them, nothing more than toleration—the same toleration which it frankly conceded to Old Light views, and to the small and uninfluential party that clung to these ; and it showed how completely, by all considerations of duty, the minority were shut up to take the pacific course. If bigotry could have been persuaded, there was in this work such a matchless combination of logic, wisdom, and charity, as should have succeeded. The writer was Dr. Lawson ; and though, amongst his various publications, it is perhaps the only one that had a strictly *occasional* character, and might have been expected to be the most fugitive, yet, unquestionably, it is the one which wears the fullest and brightest impress of his mental qualities, and will continue to represent most vividly the rare endowments and culture which all his pupils and personal friends were wont to ascribe to him. That is his only publication which could

introduce, to present and future generations of readers, the admired and beloved sage, of whom our clerical fathers spoke with such fond and persistent enthusiasm. His other writings show us but partially and faintly the great, wise, and good Dr. Lawson that was known to his disciples ; in this, the whole man appears, with his rich yet finely harmonized individualities, and in his most animated mood ; whilst his language—raised above the homeliness and looseness noticed in his general compositions—is precise, forcible, and felicitous.

The second extraordinary pamphlet was launched on behalf of the same cause, but from a different hand, and against a different party. The first was a conference with brethren ; the second was an encounter with an enemy who was, apparently, a mere individual, but, really, a very considerable party ; and though this enemy had, in his assault, displayed no skill that could either provoke or require the intervention of any distinguished champions with an overwhelming array of resistance, yet he had manifested such vile, deadly, and far-reaching malignity as armed what was contemptibly impotent with a wide power for mischief, and called for an indignant and scathing exposure by some Seceding leader, who should not only refute all the infamous calumnies against the Secession and its ‘ New Light ’ movement, but should also make the calumniator *a lamentation, a shame, and a terror to himself*, and a ‘ laughing-stock,’ or a disgusting nuisance to everybody else. The offender’s guilt was unprecedented ; he sought to stab the character of Seceders both as Christians and as citizens, and to represent them not only as traitors to the faith of their forefathers, but as democratic plotters against law and order in Church and State, and as ready to push all civil authority out of its every province into such a gulf as Revolution had lately opened up in France. It would always have been a monstrously absurd calumny to allege that Seceders—hitherto conspicuous for loyalty to the King and Constitution in principle and practice, and for

their quiet and contented deportment as citizens—had become secretly favourable to rebellion and anarchy, and were longing to put on the ‘red cap’ above heads that were crammed with sound divinity and with arguments for non-intrusion and strict discipline, and that—in their faces—expressed constant and absorbing meditation on those and kindred subjects. But the calumny was worse than *absurd*, it was, at this peculiar crisis of continental and Scottish affairs, *wickedly malignant*; for then the Pitt-Dundas despotism in Scotland, ready to repress and punish every manifestation of sympathy with the most moderate political reform, had of late—under the influence of astounding scenes in France—been possessed and distracted by a groundless fear that disaffection was spreading fast through all the intelligent classes that did not zealously support Toryism. The rulers of the north had their discrimination so blinded by wild terrors and suspicions, that they might have been got at once to believe any charge of sedition or treason recklessly offered against Seceding ministers; nor would it be easy to exaggerate the injuries to these innocent ministers, and to various public interests, which might have ensued, if the charge had been taken up and prosecuted, by means of Government *espionage* and bribed witness-bearing, before a judge like Braxfield, and a servile jury. The consequences might, indeed, have been disastrous; and they help us to conceive of the intense malignity that invented and, on the wings of the press, circulated the calumnious lie. The guilt of the calumniator was aggravated by his being a clergyman; and though he preached incessantly on truth, and charity, and a special love for the ‘household of faith,’ yet his practical homage to those graces was exhibited compendiously and emphatically in his lying calumny against Seceding brethren. His being a minister of the Established Church rendered him still more inexcusable; he had no call to ‘intermeddle’ with a purely denominational ‘strife’ within the Secession, and he

chose to become impudently intrusive, that he might have an opportunity of being maliciously calumnious. A complete unconsciousness of shame seems to have attended him ; he had no hesitation in giving his name—the Rev. Dr. Porteous of Glasgow—as if he wished to be known both to his victims and to the public, nor cared whether he should be raised to honour or sunk in infamy !

The base accusations called for a full exposure ; and Dr. Porteous, their author, deserved exemplary and memorable punishment. All the ministers attacked could have easily refuted every allegation and insinuation ; and not a few could have administered to the Doctor a very severe chastisement. But something more—especially in the matter of the offender's punishment—was desirable ; and the scourge, after the salutary effects of its immediate application, should be found to retain such terrors as would not only make Dr. Porteous, to the last day of his life, deeply penitent and humbly respectful toward Seceders, but also deter many generations of hostile Churchmen from whispering a suspicion against the loyalty of their contemporaries in the Secession. That scourge should hang, like the sword of Damocles, over every slanderously disposed Churchman, warning him to reflect on the vengeance it had once inflicted, and admonishing him to beware of calumniating the party whose good name it had so brilliantly guarded. Not less than this was required ; and, certainly, no less was accomplished by the remarkable pamphlet to which we have alluded. It annihilated all the charges that had been brought and insinuated against the Burgher Seceders and their *New Light* measures, and it subjected poor Dr. Porteous to the discipline of such torture and humiliation as great defamers but too seldom undergo, whilst the cool contempt with which every stripe was laid on, did more than anger or indignation could have done to intensify the convict's shame and pain.

It had no strokes of mere abuse ; its wit and sarcasm flashed

brightly before onlookers, who admired the rare nimbleness, skill, and force displayed ; but Dr. Porteous only knew and felt what wounds it made through all his folds of conceit and insensibility. We need not repeat, from authentic accounts, as to its overwhelming effects on the unhappy culprit, his startled surprise in receiving what he had fully provoked, and his impotent rage passing into helpless distress and disgrace ; it will suffice us to mention that, throughout all his remaining days, the Established Church Doctor was scrupulously well-behaved to Seceders, and that all who had been his abettors were glad to shrink into obscurity and silence ! The punishment, as an example, seemed to reach far beyond contemporaries, and to keep the Secession Church through many a political crisis, and many an ecclesiastical dispute, securely guarded against the charge of disloyalty. After serving its primary purpose of vindicating the innocent, and dealing with the calumniator, the pamphlet rose into the highest celebrity among literary men, who—though taking no interest either in the *Old* or in the *New Light* of Seceders—were compelled to acknowledge the admirable controversial dexterity, and the inimitable wit and sarcasm of the gifted writer. It was hailed as among the few masterpieces in satirical literature ; and almost all these it surpassed in being a model in spirit and temper, not less than in power and skill,—for it was wholly free from the settled malignity and the wild recklessness of the *Letters of Junius*. The great English satirist was possessed by a rage which was often personal rather than patriotic, and which detracted largely from the judicial dignity and fairness that should have been associated with his severe qualities, and that should have ruled every tempest of his wrath. Intensity, but not purity, marked his wrath, which was often compounded mainly of egotistical spite and envy, and violated justice both in maltreating the good, and in immoderately and without discrimination blackening and abusing the bad. The

Seceding champion's wit and sarcasm were under a far higher regulation, yet were neither less lively nor less effective. They received from justice, candour, and good nature a great superiority ; and this was far from being neutralized by the more compact and sinewy, yet graceful style of *Junius*, or by the brilliancy and startling aptitude of each figure and simile that gave weight and keenness to his blade, rather than jewels to the hilt or ornaments to the scabbard. What was the judgment of literary men about the transcendent ability of the pamphlet in question, is indicated by the fact that Dugald Stewart was wont to recommend it to his students as one of the best models of keen and powerful, yet easy sarcasm. The philosopher was, perhaps, not less delighted by its masterly defence of toleration than by its finished satire. There was no reason why the author of this production should wear a mask ; not even though he were a Seceding minister, noted for the zealous discharge of all his duties to a large city congregation. There was nothing in its aim, spirit, and style, any more than in its principles and views, to bring a shadow of reproach on his sacred profession or on his influential position. Its main characteristic was sarcastic power unsparingly applied ; yet there was not only perfect justice in its direction against a calumniator, but perfect fairness in its application, which, though unsparing, never exceeded the measure of that offender's guilt. Neither as a Christian nor as a minister had the author any of those reasons for a mask, which determined *Junius*, both as a man and a politician, to conceal his identity. The former took the first opportunity of giving his name, and on the very title-page of the first edition of the pamphlet, he appeared as the *Rev. James Peddie of Edinburgh*, who was quite ready to be held accountable for its *moral*, as well as for its *intellectual* qualities. In extinguishing Dr. Porteous and vindicating Seceders, he had taken no unfair advantage, he had dealt no foul or base blow ; and in showing himself an irresis-

tible satirist, he had not become a whit less amiable. He was regarded as 'a terror' to slanderers; yet he had not in the least forfeited the esteem, confidence, and affection of the humblest either among his clerical brethren or among his flock; and none of these failed to enjoy as easy and genial intercourse with the *conqueror of Dr. Porteous*, as they had held with him long before the notable combat. It could not be alleged that the severe punishment which he had inflicted was, in measure, spirit, or temper, incongruous with his pastoral duties, or at all injurious to his pastoral reputation; and the only regret ever expressed was that, after acquitting himself so admirably in all respects, he never again wielded his lash for the discipline of public offenders.

Adam Thomson took a deep interest in the New Light movement, and never forgot the salutary influence which those two remarkable pamphlets exerted. It was a peculiar gratification that one was written by his own Edinburgh minister, in whose pulpit services—especially in his Sunday forenoon Lectures on the characters, incidents, and lessons of Bible History—could be recognised not a little of the vivacity, sagacity, graphic force, and pointed rebuke which were so brilliant in his strictures upon Dr. Porteous. The other pamphlet was by Dr. Lawson, whose tuition in divinity he was about to enjoy through five sessions; and the admiring pupil often gave it as his opinion that the intellectual and literary characteristics of the Hall prelections at Selkirk—the finest *Lawsonian* peculiarities—were reflected far more fully and brightly in the Doctor's New Light pamphlet, than in all his other productions. He preserved the two, not merely for their intrinsic value and historic interest, but as being stamped with the mental features of their authors.

Adam Thomson's course of training, in his college period, included studies that were neither prescribed nor generally chosen. We have already alluded to his *four* sessions at

Greek under Dalzel, though the most of his companions were satisfied with *two* sessions, and not a few with only *one*. Until quite recently, *Hebrew* was sadly neglected by the divinity students belonging to all Churches in Scotland, and it was common, among Seceding students, to pick up their small stock of Hebrew in a month or two, either with the help of some extra-academical master, or by means of the simpler arrangement of themselves acting both as pupils and as teachers, and they had seldom much difficulty in laying down and forgetting all they had acquired, as soon as the Hall and Presbytery examinations in a few verses of the Old Testament were over. But Adam Thomson attended Dr. Moodie's Hebrew class in the Collège for *two* full sessions, and was desirous to gain the power of reading the much larger and more ancient division of the sacred volume in the very language which God had inspired, and which must retain His mind and will more purely and authentically than any translation. He entered the Chemistry class, instead of that for Natural Philosophy; the preference being, probably, owing to rumours about the sceptical way in which the latter class was conducted. He studied Anatomy and Surgery under Dr. Barclay, but not with the remotest idea of afterwards combining, in practice, the two learned professions, and attending to the bodies as well as to the souls of his people—a *medical clergyman* being an unnecessary, if not a very equivocal, character in a country so plentifully stocked as ours, with willing and skilful doctors, and with wise old women. He held that, in the healing art, a 'little knowledge is a dangerous thing,' and was never tempted to draw upon Dr. Barclay's lessons, or volunteer a single prescription. His study of anatomy, however, was not thrown away, as it furnished him with the most striking illustrations of the divine attributes. He also took two lengthened courses of instruction on Elocution, by a Mr. John Wilson, an excellent teacher, and the compiler of several

popular volumes on the art of public speaking. Adam Thomson was impressed with the importance of acquiring such a delivery as should not only attract hearers, but invest what he said with vivid beauty and power. He had naturally a powerful and melodious voice, which combined the qualities of depth and clearness ; and he was anxious to have it under command.

It will thus be seen that much of the preparatory training which he took was, in variety and thoroughness, voluntary, and marked his zeal for knowledge and culture. The time and attention required for his studies suffered no disturbance or encroachment from the recurrence of those 'hours of private teaching' that have frequently left the student with too short a day, during the college session, for his own pursuit of knowledge.

In the long vacations between April and November, Adam Thomson returned to the country—either to his father's house in Coldstream, or to act as tutor in the families of some relatives, where his duties were neither heavy nor disagreeable, and instead of obstructing, stimulated his mental progress. At home, he carried on his studies with ardour, preparing for the next session's duties, and at the same time going carefully, as his brother advised, through a course of reading in English literature. He delighted to resume his attendance at the weekly fellowship meetings ; and he took a lead in starting and conducting a Sabbath school, the name being given with Irish latitude, as the school was held on a *week-day* evening ; but from all its exercises being strictly those which are peculiar to a Sabbath school, it took the designation. This humble enterprise, however, was almost immediately suppressed as dangerous ! The county authorities were filled with alarm, lest a Sabbath school, both designed and fitted to communicate religious knowledge and training to the young, should raise up a band of conspirators against the Constitution, or cultivate sedition ! The danger was inferred from the fact,

that there was a 'gathering,' though of children, and that it was a novelty ; for anything which wore this aspect was dreaded by the Scottish Toryism of that day ! Its promoters were mainly Seceders ; and, though they had invariably been the most loyal of subjects, yet their 'New Light' was confounded with the political and social 'Illumination' of Parisian clubs, and—if unextinguished—would *Frenchify* Britain, and abolish the monarchy and religion. Adam Thomson and others were summoned to Dunse, to be examined about the new plot they were hatching. The authorities refused to believe that a Sabbath school could lead to any good, or that it was not likely to be perverted to mischief, whatever might be the motives of those who started it ; and they ordered it to be forthwith abandoned, and they interdicted the young student and his associates from teaching in it. Children might assemble in crowds, to engage in games of every kind ; but if they met to be instructed in the fear of the Lord, their teachers were to be prosecuted as rebellious and seditious, though no demagogues like John Wilkes had ever employed Sabbath schools as means for overthrowing the Constitution. The school was discontinued for several years, according to the imperative order of the Pitt-Dundas representatives ; and, indeed, was never resumed until by Adam Thomson himself, after his ordination to the ministry in Coldstream in 1806, when the 'powers that be' had got rid of many of their foolish fears, and had become convinced that one of the very strongest guarantees for a young man observing the laws, and promoting the well-being of this country, lay in the special training which he had received in any of the Seceding Sunday schools !

During one of his college vacations, he was in the neighbourhood of Wooler, where he attended the ministry of Mr. Bell, for whom he then and ever afterwards cherished a peculiar veneration, and who died in 1800 ; and another vacation he

spent at Mountfair, near Horndean, where he was a hearer of Mr. Calderhead, who shortly afterwards removed to a colonial sphere of usefulness. His residence in both cases was altogether agreeable ; and neither of the two families forgot that the young tutor was a relative, and that—for his own sake, as well as for the sake of his important office to train their juveniles—he was entitled to the kindest consideration ; and thus he never experienced the mortification or chilling neglect which has so often embittered the lot of a family tutor. There were two incidents in connection with those families which he was wont throughout life to mention as having profoundly impressed him. The children one day had got through their tasks, and were ready for some in-doors' amusement. To escape interruption they repaired to an unoccupied room, never fearing that it would suddenly become the scene of a heart-rending tragedy. A gun happened to be standing in a corner, and the oldest boy in the group at once took it up, and presented it at the breast of his little sister. Believing that it was unloaded, and expecting to frighten her a little by the 'sharp click,' and nothing more, he drew the trigger. The startling flash, the stunning report, and the falling of the girl *dead* on the floor, quickly showed his terrible mistake to the boy and his playmates—all horror-stricken and grief-bewildered ! The recollection of that day's scenes in the house could never become dim ; yet Adam Thomson retained a still more deeply impressed and vivid image of the quiet, tearless, and heart-broken *mother* as he knew her some months after—when visibly sinking into the grave. Whatever might be the effect of religious consolations upon her soul, they had no restorative power for her blighted physical frame, and ere long she died—an undoubted victim to grief.

The second occurrence was of a wholly different kind. There had been a hospitable gathering in the other relative's house in which the student acted for one summer. The cen-

tury which was about to close had associated hard drinking with festive occasions ; and hosts were wont to keep exacting that the guests should fill and empty their 'cups' long after there were unequivocal proofs that more than enough had already been disposed of. Overflowing libations were not wanting at the feast under notice. When the evening had advanced, the scene assumed features which were novel and far from pleasant to the student. Feeling that, as a youth, it was not his place, before so many seniors, to presume upon a restraining policy or a tone of rebuke, and assured that either would prove ineffectual, if not worse, he took an opportunity of quietly retiring. At a later hour, when the revelry had deepened, one of the guests made use of some shockingly blasphemous expression, which stood out from the relaxed conversation as gratuitous offensiveness—the very 'superfluity of naughtiness.' A companion, who was regarded as far from scrupulous or straight-laced—less so, indeed, than the offender himself—asked seriously, *how he could indulge in such language, and sit down regularly at the Lord's table?* The remonstrance had all the effect that the company could have wished, and the offending gentleman refrained from any profanity of speech during the remainder of the night. But this was not all : the terms of rebuke carried a much heavier charge than the speaker either meant or understood ; and they pierced the conscience with sudden and resistless power, and produced a penitential agony, from which he could find no relief except in the faith of the gospel. Henceforth, in the view of all his friends and companions, he was a changed man—a true Christian disciple in his character and conduct, not less than in his profession ; and Adam Thomson for many years knew him well, and esteemed him greatly in the rich development of Christian graces, and in the energetic practice of Christian duties. This incident he ever remembered as a striking proof, within the circle of his own early observation,

of the 'sovereignty' of divine grace operating upon hard-heartedness when in the mood of defiance, and doing so in the most unlikely times and circumstances, and by ill-adapted means. That grace triumphed in the 'house of feasting,' and not in that either of 'mourning' or of worship; and the festive scene had associations that might have banished every sacred influence. The censor was a mere moralist, and one of the worldly type; and the rebuke which he addressed was merely against outward indecorum. Yet the petty remonstrance, offered so unfavourably, was reinforced by that grace which 'bloweth where it listeth,' and empowered to effect such a change as the varied and earnest pulpit discourses of many years, delivered often in most solemn circumstances, had failed to produce! The small hint, that he should keep his language within the bounds of decency, proved infinitely more influential and salutary, than had been the masterly and fervid evangelical preaching of thirty or forty years! To the student, who was then preparing for the ministry, the case was memorably interesting and instructive; yet it did not furnish a single lesson against the Christian ministry, or depreciate the most energetic and persistent application of the appointed means of grace, though it showed him that grace can act independently of these, and commission the most unlikely instrumentality to convey regeneration to the soul.

In the autumn of 1799—a few months after his brother Peter had been 'licensed' by the Coldstream Presbytery to preach the gospel—Adam Thomson entered the Divinity Hall, which was then at Selkirk, under the care of the wisest 'master in Israel,' Dr. Lawson, who singly constituted the entire 'Faculty' for the institution,—yet gave the fullest satisfaction both to students and to the church at large. Adam ever regarded his Selkirk terms of study as pre-eminently happy and profitable. In common with all who received at Selkirk

their training for the ministry, he was charmed with the leading peculiarities of Hall-life there. Yet it might have been supposed that, to pass away from a national university, established in a grand pile of buildings, equipped in all the Faculties with many far-famed professors, and attended by a vast concourse of students, and to join a denominational 'Divinity Hall,' set up in a rural 'meeting-house,' where only forty or fifty young men came to be taught by the pastor of that meeting-house, would be a disenchanting transition—almost like being sent back from college to school! It was not so, however; nay, the interest around the dignified College yielded to that which invested the humble Hall. The associations peculiar to some ancient or stately seat of learning were neither needed nor desiderated at Selkirk, where, on every hand, Nature displayed scenery of far greater significance and suggestiveness than could have been expressed by any architecture. Where, too, could a training for the ministry be more fitly and impressively conducted than within the walls of a 'meeting-house' which had, on every Sabbath for several generations, resounded with the preaching of the gospel to the many families that had been drawn thither from all directions in that beautiful district? No class-room for the 'sons of the prophets' could be compared with that humble edifice, which must have been haunted, both in its pews and in its pulpit, by solemn yet stimulating memories and influences! As for the passing from among a large and promiscuous crowd in the University, to a company of forty or fifty in the Divinity Hall, it is plain that the former must have been far too numerous to be known either for pleasure or for profit, or even to be known at all; and that it was a good exchange to be transferred to the latter, which yet could have afforded to be carefully sifted, in order that it might become a band of mutual friends. There could be no charm in daily jostling against a thousand strange students that thronged the entrances; but there was a charm

in belonging to a company of students, all of whom were members of the same church, carried on the same studies, looked forward to the same sacred occupation for life, and were so few that, while all knew each other, every student had his group of close friends; and all, not only meeting daily around their instructor, but being lodged in a small country town, in adjoining apartments, had facilities for maintaining the most agreeable general intercourse, and for strengthening special friendships. Many had gone through their university course without finding half-a-dozen acquaintances or a single friend, yet no sooner were they in the Divinity Hall than they were on pleasant terms with all their companions, and had begun to cherish towards several of these such a true and lasting amity as death alone could dissolve. Hall friendships were proverbially cordial, faithful, and delightful; and coming after the cold civilities of the College, they were highly prized.

But then the transition from a large staff of highly-gifted and accomplished professors—some of them with a European fame—to a single minister of the denomination, might appear to be a considerable declension, and not the less so because this minister was understood to embody and put forth the whole educational power of the theological institution (except, if we may mention in a parenthesis what is invariably, in discussions on the resources of a Divinity Hall, kept altogether out of view—the immense proportion of that power which lies in the *self-educating energy of the students*, and in their growth and culture from within, and through their *reading*, which is a more important auxiliary than their *hearing*, if the latter were only open to the wisdom of their one nominal instructor). Yet the apparent declension, in passing from university professors to a single teacher in the Divinity Hall, was speedily rectified by experience; and though the latter was commonly called ‘the tutor,’ and very seldom and with extreme hesitation

‘the professor,’ yet he impressed all classes of disciples with an enthusiastic admiration of the rare combination of extraordinary qualifications which he possessed, and with a settled conviction that he was, at least, on a level with the greatest of the College professors! Not a few, but all of his students, formed this estimate; and they never abandoned or lowered it. At each session of the Hall, young men entered who were inclined to differ from common views, and prepared to find that Dr. Lawson’s merits had been immensely exaggerated, from not being placed in the balances of *their* impartial criticism, which had discovered so many great reputations to be ‘wanting;’ yet those critics were constrained to acquiesce in their neighbours’ judgment, and to recognise their own ideal of excellence in the plainly-dressed worth which was universally appreciated. A single week at the Selkirk Hall sufficed to bring the most independent, wilful, and erratic minds—as well as the frigid and the self-conceited—into ‘one accord’ of enthusiasm about the Doctor, who yet was not only careless, but quite unconscious of any arts for early producing favourable impressions. He never sought, by skilful arrangement, to cast the shadow of his greatness, vastly magnified, ‘before’ him; still, strangers passed with incredible rapidity into the circle of his admirers, and he was scarcely seen before he was duly estimated, and his remarkable qualities acknowledged. Certainly, if there was no disenchantment, either in quitting a city university for a rural hall in the midst of exquisite scenery, or in leaving the unknown crowds of the former for a select company in the latter, the transition from a staff of professors to a master and guide in divinity as unrivalled as Dr. Lawson, must have been eagerly welcomed; and his presence and teaching formed the principal charm in Selkirk Hall-life, whether as experienced or as remembered.

Adam Thomson had received from his brother graphic descriptions and minute details of the Professor’s procedure

and manner both in his class and in his house, along with anecdotes and floating traditions illustrative of his simple tastes and habits, and of his ever-ready learning, wit, and wisdom. Adam had heard so much, and this was both so individual and coherent, that he felt as if he already knew the Doctor. He had formed a distinct conception of his personal appearance—as all are apt to do regarding some one of whom they think much, and expect to be related to ; but on his first day at the Selkirk Hall, as soon as the Professor entered *alone* [not, as now, with half of the Synod, and no little ceremony, attending him], the student found that the real face was not only unlike what he had imagined, but wholly different—both in features and expression—from any countenance he had ever seen in the clerical or professorial ranks, or even among the laity, though it was unequivocally of the Scottish type. A first glance at Dr. Lawson's portrait still excites, in all who are familiar with his writings and character, the *surprise* which Adam Thomson felt so strongly when confronting the living original. Before him was the plainest of faces, roughened all over with the smallpox, which had also stained the complexion with a sickly and sallow hue ; yet it never suggested uncomeliness, far less harshness. The most of the features were common in themselves, but uncommon from their relative irregularity. The eyes were small, and though wide open, as if they never even winked, and looking straight forward, they had an inwardly absorbed expression, as if the attention of his mind did not follow his glance ; the brow was shapely and high, except when a 'preposterous' wig (which could at any moment have accomplished the proverbial impossibility of putting 'an old head upon young shoulders,' and have turned an Apollo into a Methuselah) flapped over his temples, as he unconsciously shifted it.

He might have sprung from a long line of moorland shepherds ; there brooded over his face such an expression of

pastoral calm, contentment, and self-communion in grave solitudes. Coarse as was the texture, and dingy the complexion, of that face, it shone with purity, benevolence, and wisdom ; and a peculiarly artless and fascinating smile lighted up both the innocence and the intelligence. His looks denoted a sagacity free from cunning, and a humanity and honesty which inspired every beholder to trust him. The whole aspect of the man had not only a novelty, but a depth and variety of expression which would better reward an hour's study than many a handsome face would reward a single moment's glance. Adam Thomson's surprise at the contrast between his fancy-sketch of Dr. Lawson and what he then really saw, was soon over ; and he at once felt that the latter was far more in keeping with the Doctor's remarkable characteristics of head and heart.

Dr. Lawson's speaking and reading were natural, homely, and impressive, harmonizing perfectly with his appearance. His manner was wholly didactic, always earnest, but never impassioned, and without any trace of declamation.

In his lectures he was expected not only to teach theology as a science, and to enter elaborately upon the development and vindication of its cardinal doctrines ; but also to show students how to prepare for preaching the gospel, and discharging all the duties of the pastoral office. He had to give subsidiary and supplemental instruction in the original languages of Scripture, in Biblical Literature, and in Church History—including a survey of the progress and decline of every leading heresy. As to *Theology*, Adam Thomson and his Scottish companions had been both substantially and systematically instructed in it by the *Shorter Catechism*, and other home and school lessons, as well as by the preaching to which they had listened ; and all that the Professor could do, in this principal department, was to exhibit the familiar science with freshness and with new attractions, and to fortify it against all

new assaults. There was in this department scope for original thinking, only in giving to the truth, which the pupils already knew, a grander aspect, with unexpected associations, and in rendering this transfiguration of the truth a vindication against modern scepticism. In the second department, however, of instructing those pupils to be preachers and pastors, there was room for the display of his rare qualifications. His independent thinking and original reflections,—his sagacity, his experience, and his learning, rendered his discussions and examples pre-eminently interesting and valuable. He probably failed in constructing a scheme of pulpit rhetoric, or in presenting such rules as, when adhered to, would have led to the appearance of British pulpit orators of the first rank. The Selkirk lectures were not, perhaps, thoroughly adapted to promote the formation of a Robert Hall; still, Dr. Lawson offered many directions that were fitted to be of inestimable value to all who undertook the function of preaching.

Great preachers are seldom accounted for by a theological professor, any more than by a schoolmaster or a nurse; yet it was a fact, that almost all the distinguished ministers who had been trained by Dr. Lawson gratefully ascribed to him much of what they were and did, and the Secession Church at large made the same acknowledgment. His lectures on the discharge of pastoral duties were of peculiar excellence, as they drew from the stores of his observation and experience all the illustrations wanted; and these his unrivalled memory had always retained, and could at once reproduce.

In the department of doctrine he taught by oral examination as well as by lectures; putting questions, chiefly upon points which he had passed over, or but slightly touched upon. And in this exercise he had a Socratic skill, testing instinctively and supplementing admirably the defective knowledge of the students; so that the hours which he thus occupied were

among the most lively and profitable in all the Hall term. A considerable proportion of each day was spent in hearing students' exercises and discourses; and many of the latter were delivered before all the members of the Doctor's congregation that wished to attend. There was often an audience that filled the area of the church, not a few of the Doctor's people being anxious to note the indications of talent, or—as they judged—the fruits of their venerated pastor's Hall instructions, in the performances of the young men. The students were strongly encouraged, and not merely permitted, by the Professor to offer remarks on each other's sermons before he gave his own criticism; and generally three or four among the seniors of the class rose in succession to indulge in strictures or eulogy upon a discourse. Adam Thomson had been so frequently urged, both by his fellow-students and the Professor, to make remarks, that, during his last two sessions, he was prominent in the band of critics, expressing himself with great readiness, animation, and accuracy, and displaying much candour and discrimination. That there was a sort of 'standing committee of critics,' is indicated in the following letter from Adam to his brother, which is still more interesting in its other contents:—

(Adam Thomson to the Rev. Peter Thomson, Whitby.)

'MY DEAR BROTHER,— . . . I left you, you know, on my road to Selkirk. I had heard that the Professor was then labouring under the consequences of a severe cold. I was sorry on my arrival to find that there was too good a foundation for the report. He was often obliged to leave off speaking for some time, by the violence of an oppressive cough. The affliction still continues, and his friends dread the consequences. Let us hope and pray that, if it be the will of our Father in heaven, their fears may be removed by his complete

recovery. The silver cup, which in the preceding session we had ordered to be prepared for him, we agreed to present as soon as a competent number of students had come up. It was received in a manner which astonished some, and pleased all. That he might not be taken at any disadvantage, Mr. Campbell and Mr. Robson were desired to tell him what we intended to do at the afternoon meeting of the Hall. After the close of the lecture, Mr. Blackadder, the president, rose from his seat, and told him that he was appointed, in the name of the society, to deliver to him the cup which he held in his hand, as a testimony of their esteem and affection. The venerable man blushed, and delivered himself in a few modest and appropriate sentences. As nearly as I could recollect them, I wrote them down immediately after our dismissal. They were as follows: "I am certainly much obliged to the students of last year for the trouble and expense they have been at. I have always met with more respect from the students than I thought I deserved. And I was glad, on their own account, and for the credit of the body to which we belong. The greatest honour that the students can put upon me, is to behave themselves suitably to their character as students of divinity with us, as they have hitherto done, in most instances at least. I, however, accept of the present with all gratitude, although it is more than I expected." The number of students was smaller than it had been for many years. It did not exceed two or three and thirty. On this account, as the Professor could not endure the cold in the meeting-house, we met, except when there were discourses, in one of the largest upper rooms. This afforded another opportunity for our teacher to show how much he was gratified by our present. One day, after the lecture, he ordered the cup to be set on the table, and along with it two bottles of wine and some sugar to be brought. He then told us that, as we had done him the honour to make him a present of a silver

cup, he thought he could not do less than give us a glass of wine, or, if we chose, any of us might have it with water and sugar out of the cup. [The writer explains that "the cup answered the purpose of a punch-bowl."] The latter way was preferred by all of us. Having, in the course of the conversation, again expressed his gratitude, he said he hoped we would not be offended if at any future period he should find it necessary to prevent any similar expressions of kindness ; for, added the good man, with a smile, "It was a saying in my young days, that 'Divinity was free all the world over,' and I should not like to be paid for it."

'At an early period of the session, I got my discourses off my hand. They met with a tolerable reception. My exercise was murdered in the delivery ; it was but ill-mandated at any rate. What added greatly to my confusion, I received your letter just the night before. I stammered through in the best way I could ; and having now, for one year, had it in my power to set the "critics" at defiance, I thought I might hazard my reputation by adding one to their number. . . . Towards the end of the session, Mr. Mason came to Selkirk with the view of engaging some of the students to go as preachers to America. He himself is a minister of the Associate congregation at New York. He preached once at Selkirk, and, even in a single discourse, discovered such fervency of zeal, such soundness of understanding, and such elegance of language, as are seldom united in any preacher. No fewer than sixteen congregations, he informed us, were ready for ministers,—all of them superior to the average ones in this country. Even in a temporal point of view—if such a view should be taken into consideration—they are far preferable. Mr. Mason's stipend is said to be about £400. He wants an assistant, and is exceedingly solicitous to engage some of the students to accompany him, or at least to promise to follow him over the Atlantic. He

wrote to the Professor a very pressing letter, which was read to us the last time he was in the Hall. He withdrew during this reading. He previously, however, after passing some compliments to the Professor and the students, observed, that he was much mistaken if he should find none among us who would comply with his invitation ; “and,” continued he, “if I get none, I can only say that it will leave a pang in my bosom that will thrill every nerve in my frame, and will vibrate to the very heart of the churches I represent !” He leaves this country soon, accompanied by Mr. James Paterson, the only one, it seems, upon whom he could prevail. The Synod, it is expected, will at their next meeting do something in this business. Those wanted must have been, at least, for four years at the Hall. I was so full of it when at Selkirk, that I spoke of going both to Mr. Mason and to the Professor. I mentioned, however, an objection, which, I am afraid, is an insurmountable one, viz. the circumstance of my being lame, and therefore unfit for the necessary fatigue. Mr. Mason thought this of no great moment ; and the Professor, having told me that he did not know me to be lame,¹ observed, that I had time enough to think about it. . . . The “critics” were so much impressed with a sense of Mr. Mason’s superior genius, that they seemed resolved to be mute during his stay. The first sermons delivered in his hearing were by Wilson and Paterson. Previous to the criticisms on them, two “private” discourses were given. But neither the “honour of the Hall” (a phrase then in the mouth of every one), nor the Professor’s strongly expressed wish, could draw forth any remarks. After a few strictures and observations from himself, the private discourses were dismissed, and the public ones of Wilson and

¹ Dr. Thomson sometimes alluded to this admission by Dr. Lawson, as illustrating his absence of mind. For several years he had, in his own house, as well as in the class-room, and occasionally on the street, been familiar with the student’s appearance ; yet he had failed to notice the halt.

Paterson came to be taken into consideration. Again we were all called upon, and again we all refused to rise. Some of the students then called out to me, and the Professor repeated his request that I should make a few observations. The superior abilities of the two preachers, and the excellence of their discourses, the small number and the trifling nature of my remarks, and the presence of Mr. Mason, had determined me when I went into the Hall to be silent ; but I was now under a sort of necessity to say what I could. Not so much from the value of my remarks themselves, as from the manner in which they were extorted at once by the students and the Professor, and from some other little incidents which I need not mention, I gained a little credit, it may be, in the eyes of the American.'

This letter bears the date of April 1802, and was written to his brother, who was then in the third year of his ministry at Whitby. He had travelled as a 'probationer' for only a few months ; yet during these he had attracted much notice by his excellent sermons, and the admirable way in which he delivered them. He preached to two vacant congregations, and both 'called' him to be their minister. One was in Paisley, and was well known to be numerous and prosperous ; the other was in Whitby, and was new, small, and struggling, in the midst of a population that knew nothing of Secession, and cared as little for Presbyterianism. If the Synod (which at that time claimed and exercised the right of determining which of the two calls should be preferred) had acted in conformity with the views and motives which now guide almost all the individual ministers who, in such cases, decide for themselves, it would have decreed that Peter Thomson should go to Paisley, as to a larger and more promising field both for usefulness and comfort ; but the Synod had often peculiar notions about exacting self-denial from a young man under its authority,

and he was sent to Whitby,—where, however, he laboured with the most cheerful zeal, and without feeling a grudge at such a questionable ordering of his lot. The Selkirk students, when hearing of the Synod's procedure in determining, on behalf of a licentiate, his rejection of a very good and a still more promising settlement, and his acceptance of a poor and doubtful one, were not quite so easily reconciled; and the more closely they debated about it in their groups, the more unsatisfactory it appeared, and the more rebellious against it they became at heart. Still, a considerable time had to elapse—introducing not a few fresh illustrations of the grievance—before the Synod resigned its authority in the question of competing calls; and yet its resumption in a modified shape is demanded by some, on the ground that it might repress many absurdities and affectations that are so rank and offensive in the paraded statements of some ministers who accept or decline calls. If liberty, however, has been perverted, the proper remedy is not to return to tyranny; but instead of re-establishing the Synod's right to adjudicate, let the individuals called be continued in their power to decide upon acceptance or rejection, but, at the same time, be strictly confined to a categorical answer—*Yes* or *No*—without any of those confidential orations (about an agonizing halting between two attractions, and about a painful solution obtained at length by prayer, *and* the consideration of the larger stipend) that have disgusted so many onlookers.

Adam Thomson had a frank and genial nature, and an easy and engaging address, which, along with his alacrity and spirit in promoting whatever would either improve or gratify his fellow-students, made him a general favourite in the Hall. His prominent place in the tribe of 'critics' did not change the agreeable terms on which he stood with all; for these felt assured that he would venture upon no severity for the mere sake of hurting their feelings or pleasing his own vanity.

They came from all parts of the kingdom ; a few were from the north of England and the north of Ireland ; and from their conversation he obtained much information about the individual characteristics of their Secession ministers, and about the noble work these were doing—often in districts where the Established clergy were as fatally Moderate as in his own border county. The leading Secession ministers in the different localities came under minute description ; and this was interesting to him, to whom they were entire strangers : for there was no contemporary publication to furnish intelligence concerning the Secession cause and its representatives, and the progress that was being made over all the country. Whilst thus maintaining a pleasant companionship with all, he entered into close and enduring friendship with a few who, as ‘ choice spirits,’ were attracted to each other, and who subsequently, in the pastoral spheres which they respectively occupied, continued to watch one another, and all that befell them, with the most affectionate regard,—accounting it a precious privilege and delight to renew, whenever Providence permitted, the personal and oral intercourse which distance interrupted, but which never lost the peculiar charm given to it from its origin in Selkirk. With those friends he passed much of his time during the Hall sessions ; daily they met at each other’s lodgings, or rambled abroad in the romantic outskirts of the little town ; whilst on Saturdays they held longer conferences, or took wider excursions. Among those cherished associates of his were John Brown (who became the celebrated Professor of Exegetical Theology, and minister of Broughton Place Church, Edinburgh), W. M’Lay, W. Lee, and James Elles, afterwards ministers at Stichel, Horndean, and Saltcoats. Two of these were settled in Adam Thomson’s immediate neighbourhood, and were for nearly forty years members, along with him, of the same presbytery ; and his intercourse with them had a fraternal tenderness and frankness. He and Mr. Elles had

lodged together during a Hall session, and both looked back to the period as one of rare enjoyment. Elles had, indeed, remarkable qualities as a companion,—an *ever-flow* and an *overflow* of geniality and generosity, and an equally liberal and ready supply of colloquial wit and eloquence. He had a prodigious energy, which seemed to be not only inexhaustible, but without reaction or ebbing, or even a brief mood of languor. If he had been suddenly disturbed in any of his sleeping hours, he would have started up, without a yawn or any eye-rubbing, into his full presence and energy of mind. His appearance (which in youth, as well as at a later stage, never failed to draw notice) was strongly indicative of this explosive power ; and his voice and gesticulation gave a most effective discharge to all his vivacities and severities. Even in such an affair as that of calling over the Synod roll, his energy was conspicuous ; for he not only gave out the names clearly and quickly, but he moved the members to respond with similar distinctness and despatch. He might occasionally be ‘out of temper,’ for the offices which he held subjected him to much annoyance ; but he was never ‘out of spirits,’ and this perpetual vivacity, when not associated with coxcombry or imbecility, is, in an intimate companion, peculiarly pleasant and stimulating. Formidable as it made him to presumptuous strangers, whom he could easily astonish and extinguish by an outburst of blazing scorn and invective, it had no terror for his friends. These addressed him by the familiar name of ‘Jamie,’ and none of them had a fear of his explosive indignation, unless he caught them in the act of mangling—instead of carving—a fowl !

The following anecdote of Hall life refers to three members of the friendly group. On the evening of the day when Mr. John Brown had delivered a Hall sermon, and Adam Thomson had criticised it, the lodgings occupied by Messrs. Elles and Thomson were honoured, as they often had been before, with the presence of Mr. Brown, who probably called there with

the amiable design of showing that he entertained no grudge and felt no pain on account of the strictures adventured by one of the two friends. It should be mentioned, that the criticism had been seasoned with a little playful satire against the half-philosophical, half-poetical garb in which the young preacher chose to clothe his religious doctrine,—a style of preaching widely different from that which he afterwards adopted with transcendent success. The critic had meant the satire to be wholly good-natured ; yet, in the haste and heat of extempore expression, some sharper epithets than he intended may have been introduced ; and probably the novel style was handled as a sort of affectation. At all events, the preacher seems to have felt at first a little hurt, though retiring within a profession of stoical contempt. The Professor, too, had substantially sanctioned the student's strictures. When Mr. Elles, wishing to get this affair of the criticism introduced in order that it might be finally and amicably dismissed, asked Mr. Brown how he felt after 'Adam's remarks : ' ' Oh ! ' replied the Apollo of the Divinity Hall, with Apollo's scorn gleaming from his beautiful countenance, but with words that were not quite so classical—' Oh ! they just went in at one ear, and out at the other ! ' Mr. Elles, after hinting that he had not been aware of any hollow passage in John Brown's well-packed head that would permit such an easy and convenient exit, continued : ' Still, John, they gave a good dirl ! ' The friendship between the critic and the preacher was not interrupted ; and when the latter occupied the Professor's chair, he was never more severe against any Hall discourses than against those which had much of the style he had himself once, as a young man, displayed, and which he denounced as 'sounding brass and tinkling cymbal.'

The same three friends, along with a few companions, were, on another occasion, enjoying one of the long rambles which they could take on a Saturday. Their pace was that of sauntering rather than of travelling, and their main business was

talking, except when they paused to view the many bands of reapers that were engaged in the corn-fields on either side of the highway. They reached Galashiels, and were turning the corner of a street, where a carriage, full of ladies, happened to be standing. 'The sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair;' but it is not mentioned whether the latter formed as high an estimate of the personal attractions of the former. In the present case, however, the reverse of the text occurred; and whilst the young men in training for the ministry formed and expressed no opinion as to whether the ladies in the carriage were 'fair,' one of these ladies exclaimed, in a voice loud enough to be heard by the students, 'My —— ! there's the prettiest man I ever saw !' The students bashfully hurried out of sight and hearing, as if they had no right to listen to the over-frank declaration; and Mr. Elles, making great play with his legs and elbows to escape, kept asking, waggishly, 'Whose face does she call the "prettiest?" Is it mine?' As soon as they were alone on the road to Selkirk, they began an animated discussion on this inquiry that had been raised by Mr. Elles, as to which of them had drawn forth the emphatic avowal of feminine admiration. Mr. Elles, ever eager for intellectual sport, called upon them to lay aside all affected humility or false delicacy on the one hand, and all conceit on the other. Let them, he urged, 'remember' their own faces that day, and be candid about their personal attractions! For his own part, he would not allow the lady's compliment to go past him, unless he were convinced that he had no right to appropriate it. The speaker, though richly endowed in mind, had a face and form of undeniable plainness; and his challenging a comparison for beauty was not the least comic point in the mock-examination. Of course, they all knew perfectly well whose face it was that the lady praised so emphatically. They had at once and unanimously concluded that it was Mr. John Brown, whose remarkable combination of delicate with

bold and manly attractions had surprised her into admiration. The discussion, however, proceeded as if the reference were perplexed and difficult ; and their several claims were minutely considered and compared. Mr. Elles waggishly declined to resign the compliment altogether ; he would only divide it with John Brown. ‘ Depend upon it,’ said he, ‘ it was either Brown or Elles—more likely Elles, as the prettier man from his bearing and gait ;’ and he took one or two heroic steps, and made some flourishes with his arms. Yet he would no more have thought of seriously advancing such pretensions to beauty than would the venerable Dr. Lawson himself. He merely treated his friends and himself as the *dramatis personæ* in a small interlude that might beguile a few miles of the journey back to Selkirk ; and the lady’s exclamation could scarcely have had a more harmless result. Not a few groups it would have thrown into sulky silence or bitter speaking, through envy of the praise bestowed on a companion’s face.

Adam Thomson, during his Hall course, had the high privilege of enjoying Dr. Lawson’s peculiar regard and affection ; and afterwards, when he became a minister, he received many proofs of his venerable Professor’s friendship.

CHAPTER III.

TERM AS A PROBATIONER, AND EARLY YEARS OF MINISTRY
AT COLDSTREAM.

(1804-1816.)



AFTER undergoing the usual examinations, and delivering trial-discourses before his Presbytery, Adam Thomson was, on the 22d February 1804, licensed to preach the gospel, and added to the list of Secession *probationers*, all of whom desire and expect that they will be withdrawn almost immediately from that list. They are sanguine that their individual merits will flash forth irresistibly; each believing that all the *vacant* congregations will seize upon him, just as the 'seven women' are represented as desperately 'taking hold of one man,' that he might take away 'their reproach.' In the case of a probationer, however, the 'reproach' rested rather upon him than upon the vacant congregations: and these, in urging him to be their minister, were supposed to take away his reproach, and to invest him with their own honour. If such views and feelings regarding a probationer's lot were entertained by all in entering upon it, we cannot wonder that they were confirmed by a considerable experience of it, whilst their hopes of escaping became faint and fainter, and the idea of being carried away and ordained—as if by storm—was altogether dismissed.

In the beginning of the century, the licentiates of the Secession were far more considerably treated than their neighbours in the Establishment; and the contrast is still maintained, though with some recent modifications. Indeed,

the Kirk probationers had no position whatever ; they were never, as a class, recognised, but were without rights, and almost without duties. Many of them had no preaching engagements, but continued at their former occupation as schoolmasters ; seldom entering a pulpit, unless when it would otherwise have been empty ; yet hoping on, through dreary years, that some kind patron would at length intervene with a presentation. Not a few others had occasional invitations to officiate for a day in place of indisposed or absent ministers ; and they thought themselves handsomely rewarded if they were pressed to dine in the manse. The Kirk had pulpit work—regular and occasional—quite enough to employ her probationers ; and surely she could have paid them. Yet there was no arrangement for distributing that work into individual tasks ; and many preachers remained idle, while many congregations were left without pulpit instructions. The idea of giving to those probationers as fair and equal opportunities as were possible of preaching before *vacant* congregations, so that these might have full means of judging as to the men best qualified to be their pastors, was never entertained in the Establishment. *The Secession*, however, had, soon after its formation, laid down a few just and sensible regulations concerning its preachers ; and it took care to have them wisely enlarged and adjusted, as the church grew, and its preachers were multiplied. All of these had a fair share of preaching, both in town and in country, and in places that were near and distant ; and still greater concern was shown in impartially appointing them to such congregations as were looking out for pastors. The Secession probationers held no nondescript position, like that of their Established brethren, but had their rights, interests, and labours ascertained and protected ; and they found a home in every Secession manse.

In those days, a Secession licentiate went from the Presbytery to the horse-market, for he required to be mounted

for his frequent and forced marches to distant places ; whilst his brother of the Kirk, so far from needing such help, was scarcely called to exercise his own limbs. On most of the roads which the former had to take, there were no stage-coaches or other available conveyances : a horse was therefore indispensable. Report says that, in general, the horses of the preachers were far from showy or spirited, the riders being doubtful of their own skill to manage any other than slow and safe hacks. But they were never gathered together for review or drill ; and the public missed what might have been a richly grotesque spectacle. We have never heard, however, that a licentiate, in choosing his horse, felt it expedient to consult the popular taste, lest in *vacant* congregations objections might be raised against the dashing and sportsman-like style in which he was mounted ; though these objections could not have been more impertinent and foolish than the criticisms which some vacant congregations in the Establishment have of late maintained openly against the *red hair* and other personal characteristics of certain candidates ! Popular election was never exposed to contempt by any such freakishness of fancy in Seceders ; all this was left to be developed in, and elicited from, the members of the Kirk, by the Aberdeen Act ! Adam Thomson, as a practised rider, did not feel bound, by considerations either of safety or of comfort, to conform to the leisurely pace of the most of his brethren, and he procured a horse that had some speed and spirit.

Still, after furnishing himself with such a help for expeditious and extensive travelling, our new licentiate was for several months kept preaching within the Border district alone ; yet he did not follow his brother's example, in making his first appearance as a preacher before the well-known congregation at Coldstream ; and thus he was saved from having the nervous fear and excitement—incident to his first confronting a public audience, and delivering his 'maiden' sermon—magnified and

intensified by the circumstance of that audience consisting of his own anxious family, sympathizing friends, and curious acquaintances, and showing almost none but the 'old familiar faces,' which were fitted to overthrow his already doubtful self-command. It is trying for a young man to preach for the first time before any congregation; but doubly trying to do so before the congregation to which he has belonged from infancy, and in which his near relatives and the companions of his youth are present, watching in painful suspense over every word and look that may augur failure or success. Adam Thomson's opening Sabbath of pulpit labour was in Horndean; and there, too, he knew many of the people that heard him, as he had regularly, when acting as a tutor at Mount Fair, worshipped along with them. They had recently lost their minister, and were now receiving a supply of preachers with the view of agreeing about one whom they should call to take the charge of them; but from the first day on which they heard Adam Thomson, they preferred him decidedly and enthusiastically, and were bent on calling him. On the next Sabbath he preached at Stichel, where a call had been recently given to one of his Hall friends, Mr. M'Lay; and for the following month he occupied this and the Horndean pulpit alternately, giving increased satisfaction. He was summoned to quit the Borders before he had an opportunity of addressing a Coldstream audience; and mounting his horse, he proceeded to fulfil engagements at Wooler, Edinburgh, and Leslie, and in other places in Fife. The only vacancy among the congregations in these localities was in Leslie; and there the people were at once so deeply impressed with his preaching, that they thought of no other candidate. From Fife, however, he was ordered back to Horndean. Apparently the leaders of the Horndean congregation had prevailed upon the clerk of the Border Presbytery to grant them as many hearings of their favourite probationer as could be managed; and there he

returned for two Sabbaths more. A higher authority now intervened to direct his movements; and it was intimated to him that, by appointment of the Synod, he must forthwith set out for London, to preach in Miles' Lane Chapel for five months. His first appearance in Coldstream seemed to be thus indefinitely delayed, whilst the local desire to hear him had been quickened into a passionate eagerness by reports of his popularity in so many quarters. It is probable that he would have made efforts to gratify both his fellow-townsmen and himself by preaching in his native place, if it had not been for the consideration that there was then a vacancy in the congregation. His delicacy led him to avoid whatever had an intrusive aspect; and he might ask, why he should be heard—out of his turn, as it were—in a 'vacancy,' merely because he had happened to be born there? An unexpected occurrence, however, served to bring him, in the most unobjectionable way, before the Coldstream congregation, previous to his long engagement in the great metropolis. He had gone to Berwick, thence to sail for London; but through an accident to the vessel (which belonged to a crazy class that met with—perhaps provoked—many misfortunes), his voyage was delayed for a fortnight, and he returned to his father's house, congratulating himself that he should now have an opportunity—the first since he obtained licence to preach—of hearing the gospel. But the Coldstream folks no sooner knew where he was, than they arranged a different and less private Sabbath occupation for him; and congratulated themselves on finding a strikingly adjusted opportunity for listening to their eloquent fellow-townsmen. They urged him to preach on the first Sabbath (17th June 1804); he did so, and with such deep satisfaction to the people, that they insisted on arranging with another probationer, who had been appointed for the following Sabbath, that Adam Thomson should undertake the whole of the preaching at Coldstream during that Sabbath also. When

for the first time within the pulpit in his native place, there would be memories and associations of the *past* suggested to him from the well-known walls and pews of the building, and from the not less familiar faces turned towards him ; yet he could have no glimpses of the *future*, which should for more than half a century connect him with the place and the people. From the Sabbath of his first preaching before those who had long been his fellow-hearers, they never ‘lost sight of him,’ to use the simple but expressive language which fell from him fifty years after, when his jubilee was celebrated.

On the 1st of July he occupied the pulpit in Miles’ Lane Chapel, London. His first voyage to the metropolis had been unusually quick ; but in his way back, before the close of the year, he was made acquainted with the miseries of a tardy and difficult sea-passage, though these had no influence in dissuading him from again and frequently visiting London, and even trusting himself to the inconstant winds and waves. He remained in the great city for five months, and was deeply impressed with its matchless collection of wonders and attractions ; yet he never ceased to feel that the chief and all-absorbing wonder was the city itself. All other objects were wrapped up and concealed in the endless maze of London streets, and the full tide of human life on all sides rolled over and swept them out of view. LONDON itself absorbed all prominences and specialities, and these were but like the small inequalities on the earth’s surface, when the whole earth is considered and its form seen. Not one of its innumerable and unrivalled ‘curiosities’ could serve as an illustrative *frontispiece* to the city ; not even such a spectacle as the opening of a session of Parliament—with royalty and all the orders of the State—would be properly characteristic of London. Mr. Thomson, however, knew so much about the political men and measures of the day as gave him a deep interest in the House of Commons ; and his admiration of oratory drew him

to be a frequent hearer of the debates in which Pitt and Fox put forth their grand and brilliant powers. The House, then and for another generation, was 'unreformed;' still its members, though elected by and representing families, groups, cliques, and factions, possessed a high average of eloquence, and included a larger number of orators and debaters of the first rank, than any subsequent period has witnessed. Dull and tedious nights in the House were then, for visitors, enlivened and brightened by flashes of wit and eloquence far more frequently than now. Newspaper reporting had not reached its present accuracy and fulness; yet, somehow, in the age which allowed most of what was spoken even by chief senators to pass away without meeting the public eye, there was a nobler kind of oratory, flowing forth more certainly and freely than in our times, when every word—grand or mean, wise or foolish—that falls, is transferred to columns which will be immediately seen by millions of eyes, and may be scanned by future generations and a distant posterity, and which therefore might have been expected to surround parliamentary speaking with such favourable and fostering influences as should have encouraged the development of oratory into grander qualities and a more abundant measure. Certain it is, that the eloquence of the House of Commons has not advanced along with reporting; nay, the former seems to have been frightened either into silence or prosiness by the latter's care and success in preserving and publishing whatever was spoken by individuals who stood 'on their legs.' In 1804, our Scottish preacher, visiting the House, listened to more powerful speeches, from a greater number of members, than he was ever afterwards—in a succession of such visits as were neither 'few nor far between'—fortunate enough to hear. Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, Wilberforce, Wyndham, Canning, Tierney, Grey, Whitbread, and not a few besides, who had nearly equal power in debate, gave, in 1804, such oratorical splendour to

the House as he never again witnessed. He was struck with one peculiarity in Pitt, which distinguished him from his great rival, and from all the eloquent senators : Pitt never fell below his own grand level ; but even when he rose to offer a single short sentence of reply to some petty question, his words were as select and were as nobly delivered as if they belonged to a masterpiece of his prepared for a political or national crisis ; whereas the other speakers were not only often unequal to themselves, but were invariably careless and clumsy when making one or two remarks. A stranger would then have been grievously disappointed by the shortcomings of these famous men ; but Pitt was always *himself*, and in the briefest sentence that fell from him the true orator could be recognised. Fox had a mightier intellect, and a purer and more intense flame of eloquence ; but these had often an irregular and imperfect manifestation ; and Mr. Thomson was not privileged to witness the great debater in any of his continuously and surpassingly brilliant exhibitions. He had seen no likeness and had heard no description of Wilberforce before he gazed upon the living figure, so diminutive and ‘old-boyish’ in its appearance, and so grotesquely nimble in its movements ; yet soon the silvery eloquence of the Christian statesman had such a charm for the ear, that the eye ceased to note his physical oddities ; and of all the parliamentary men whom Mr. Thomson then heard, none attracted him so strongly as Mr. Wilberforce, though doubtless not a little of this fascination was owing to the senator’s high Christian character, about which the young preacher had been told in the north, but had in London received much interesting information from the venerable Dr. Waugh.

During his stay in the metropolis, he was still more eager and diligent in taking opportunities of hearing the celebrated pulpit orators who officiated there, either regularly or occasionally. That, perhaps, was far from being the brightest era

of evangelical eloquence in London ; yet he was not ashamed when comparing its average specimens with those of parliamentary oratory ; and against the most powerful and brilliant Commoner he could place a modest Baptist pastor, Robert Hall, who refused to quit an humble sphere in the provinces, yet displayed an eloquence which, according to the admission of Pitt himself, had never been surpassed in modern or even in ancient times. The subject of our memoir entertained, ever after his first visit to London, a high opinion of the preaching abilities of evangelical Englishmen in all denominations ; and we have often heard him sketch graphically the peculiarities of the most notable occupants of the metropolitan pulpit. He had seen not a little of Rowland Hill, both in public and private ; and though he had no liking for the *comicalities* which this preacher introduced rather frequently and liberally into his discourses, he believed that his ministry had been remarkably fruitful, and he saw that the many little eccentricities of the man were wholly unaffected. Rowland had, at the time, a strong feeling against the Scotch Presbyterian clergy of almost all denominations, who in their church courts had lately denounced the hearty reception which vast audiences had given to his open-air services, and his other proceedings when making an evangelizing tour in the north. He had repeatedly preached on the Calton Hill to twenty thousand hearers ; and his presence in Scotland gave an impulse to the Haldane movement which was occasioning very unnecessary alarm, instead of redoubled and much wanted activity, to our sturdy but lazy Presbyterianism. If the clergy either could not or would not overtake the evangelistic work—so plainly required in Scotland (though more so in England)—why should not *laymen* enter the field ? The Establishment and the Secession were then equally prompt to discharge ‘minutes’ and ‘resolutions’ against lay-preaching, and all such innovations as were favoured by the Haldanes and their enterprising party ; and such arguments

were employed for restricting the proclamation of the gospel to sacerdotal agency, as would now be seen to be in keeping with Puseyism. Even *lay addresses* in Sabbath evening schools were denounced by one of the Secession Synods as ‘the manifest abuse of those schools;’ and the schools themselves were interdicted, ‘if in them discourses are delivered *tending* to encroach upon the work of the ministry—if there is such an attendance of multitudes as to give the school the appearance of an assembly met for public worship.’ Rowland Hill confronted this folly with kindred folly; and his discourses, when in Scotland, consisted largely of invectives against the Synod’s views. On this subject he and Dr. Jamieson of Edinburgh had a pamphlet war, which was without any result except to give the public a little amusement over the contrast between the two combatants: the ponderous and heavy-armed Scot, carrying vast ‘impedimenta’ of learning and criticism; and the nimble and versatile Englishman, dancing like a harlequin around his slow and unwieldy adversary, and dodging every stroke which fell, yet too restless in his movements to become in turn seriously aggressive. Mr. Thomson had no grudge or prejudice against Mr. Hill from this controversy, as he and other students, at the time of its occurrence, could not approve of the extreme views advanced by either party, but were persuaded that the denunciations of lay-preaching were in substance and spirit unchristian, though, on the other hand, the advocacy of it might have been recklessly conducted and pushed to an unsafe length. As a preacher, Rowland Hill was the last man to be taken as a model; yet from him a Scottish licentiate might take valuable lessons in *delivery*, and in something nobler. And Mr. Thomson was consciously profited; as he was, indeed, from hearing many of the English Independent and Baptist preachers in London, who spoke with such an earnestness and urgency as were rare in the northern pulpit. The most eminent of these ministers he afterwards

knew better ; and his earliest descriptions of them may thus be withheld.

Dr. Waugh, though neither an Englishman nor an Independent, but a Scot and a seceding Presbyterian, filled a sphere in London which was neither small nor obscure. As a preacher, he stood deservedly high, with the English not less than with the Scottish portion of his audiences ; and he would have stood far higher—nay, he might have risen to a much nobler eminence in the London pulpit than had been reached by any of his countrymen—if his time and energy, that were largely engrossed with such philanthropic and Christian labours as evangelical laymen should have undertaken, had been mainly reserved for the function of preaching. He might have belonged to the foremost class of city preachers, if, like these, he had kept his hours and his powers undistracted by so many beneficent occupations, and free to prepare for the pulpit. Had he thoroughly cultivated and exercised his preaching gifts, it is probable that he would have accomplished far more good than resulted from the vast amount of his multifarious exertions, and he would have left a far nobler model of pulpit excellence. Still, among the various churches in London, he favourably represented Scotland and Presbyterianism.

Mr. Thomson appears to have preached almost as frequently in Dr. Waugh's church (Wells Street) as in Miles' Lane, to which he had been appointed. He was treated with exceeding kindness and frankness by the Doctor, who had received strong attestations of the young man's talents, character, and amiability. At this time, Dr. Waugh, though not laid aside, was in a far from satisfactory state of health ; and the exchange of pulpits with the preacher who was supplying at Miles' Lane, tended to make the invalid Doctor's Sabbath labours considerably lighter. Certainly such an exchange was not proposed and often adopted with the view of giving relief to the young preacher, or in consideration of the small stock of his sermons, though many

a preacher has been in a sad plight when, having been kept too many weeks in the service of one congregation, he finds that all his ‘parchments,’ including even academic exercises, have been used up, so that for the next Sabbath he must attempt the novel and apparently impossible feat of producing two entirely new discourses, unless he can negotiate with some neighbouring minister an exchange of pulpits. Mr. Thomson probably had sailed for London with no more than the average stock of sermons with which licentiates start upon their course ; but, fortunately, his mind had been so richly furnished with evangelical truth, and its Scripture evidences, and he had also been so thoroughly practised in the correct, forcible, and elegant expression of what he knew, thought, and felt, that he could in any week prepare two new discourses, to be delivered from memory, with perfect ease and the utmost animation, on the Sabbath. *He* was thus indifferent about any exchange of pulpits ; and so was the Miles’ Lane congregation. Whenever city congregations suffered under the continuous and lengthy service of a dull and unpopular probationer, they were ready to mitigate the infliction by effecting a series of exchanges between him and a few ministers ; and some cases of *baptism*, the administration of which is reserved for ordained pastors alone, could be adroitly managed to suit those occasions. The Miles’ Lane people, however, had no wish to abridge Mr. Thomson’s term of preaching. From the beginning they heard him with an approbation which steadily passed into admiration and enthusiasm ; and they soon manifested the same decided preference which had hitherto been elicited from those vacant churches in the North that had listened to his preaching for a week or a month. They were agreed in wishing him to be their pastor ; and with due form they petitioned their Scottish Presbytery to ‘moderate in a call ;’ but to the grievous disappointment of the congregation, and to the great surprise of Dr. Waugh, an answer was returned that ‘the Presbytery did

not deem it expedient to grant the moderation.' Long afterwards, it came out that this was the answer of the *clerk*—forming himself into a Presbytery; and as the assumption was the result of eccentricity, rather than of presumption or lordship, and was also at length confessed, we leave the matter without further animadversion, though, as Mr. Thomson often remarked, 'the unpresbyterial proceeding had probably changed his home for life.'

On Sabbath evenings he also preached frequently in Crown Court chapel, which was then without a minister. His vigorous and animated discourses were not less acceptable there than elsewhere; and after a meeting of the congregation, at which there had been manifested unanimity and enthusiasm of views and sentiments, the office-bearers and some of the influential members entered into a correspondence with him, to induce him to entertain favourably the invitation which they were ready to give, that he should be their pastor. The congregation was Presbyterian, yet connected with the Church of Scotland, and not with the Secession; and he took the earliest opportunity of explaining to the Crown Court people, that he could become their minister only on the condition that they, as a congregation, entered within the Secession pale. With a single exception, all the elders, managers, members, and adherents were quite ready to make the concession required; and the one man's opposition was wholly grounded on the increased difficulty which, he alleged, the congregation would experience in obtaining from the Secession Synod occasional supply of preaching whenever their minister could not occupy his own pulpit. They promised, however, that if they were prevented from placing themselves under the superintendence of that Synod, and becoming a Seceding congregation, they would allow him, as their minister, full power to govern them in accordance with Seceding principles and polity. In spite of his plain and decisive answers, that he could not abandon

the Secession, they continued to hope that in some way the obstacles to his becoming their pastor might be removed or surmounted. We can judge from the many letters sent to him by leaders in the congregation, that the writers were highly estimable for piety, intelligence, and culture, and that they were men whom any earnest minister would rejoice to reckon among his supporters and friends, and to have their influence, as precious 'leaven,' working and spreading through the congregation. They had much juster and more liberal notions than were then common about ministerial remuneration : they offered him £400 per annum ; and this, to a young Scottish licentiate, whose expectations could not rise reasonably above the fixed rate of a single hundred, must have been far from repulsive ! From his conscientious adherence to Secession principles, he could only refuse the tempting offer ; and, besides, all his cherished hopes of public labour and social happiness in the future grew and blossomed within the Secession enclosure. He had been vastly 'popular' wherever he preached, but the most satisfactory proof of popularity is a 'call,' and during his stay in London, after the equally abortive proceedings in Miles' Lane and Crown Court chapels, *calls* were transmitted to him from Horndean and Leslie. His own choice between the two was strongly in favour of Leslie ; but in the case of two or more competing calls, the Synod interposed its prerogative of determining authoritatively to which of the inviting congregations the licentiate should go as pastor. The decision between Horndean and Leslie was to be made at the first meeting of Synod, whilst Mr. Thomson was still in London. He had written to his brother Peter (who a few months before had removed from Whitby to take charge of the Seceding congregation in Albion Chapel, Leeds), expressing his clear preference of Leslie, and instructing his brother, who intended to go to the Synod, to intimate and to support that preference. An omission, however, on the part

of a hotel servant at Newcastle to arouse the brother in time for an early coach to Edinburgh, detained him from reaching the Synod until the discussion on the two calls and the court's judgment had been fully gone through, and other business was in hand. During the consideration of those calls, there was not the faintest indication of the preacher, who had received them, having any leaning to either ; and it was not surprising that the Synod, being in perfect ignorance of his sentiments, should have determined in express contradiction to these. The decision was, that he should be ordained at Horndean, whilst Leslie was his own strong choice.

In returning home from his London engagement, he spent some days at Leeds with his brother, in whose pulpit he preached on a Sabbath and on the following Tuesday ; and to this delay there was added what was caused by an unusually stormy and tedious voyage, both to and from Yorkshire, and this made him too late for a preaching appointment in Scotland. Probably a complaint was made by the disappointed congregation to their and his Presbytery ; at all events, the latter summoned him to answer for his detention. His excuse might have been expected to be sustained as sufficient : he had been hurrying, as fast as wind and wave could carry him, not away from, but towards, the scene of his engagement ; yet wind and wave 'proved contrary.' The Presbytery, however, insisted on regarding the case as calling for censure ; the Rev. Robert Hall of Kelso, who had great influence with his brethren, taking an unfavourable view. On the preacher rising to offer a brief defence, Mr. Hall became indignant ; and, as sometimes happened with this excellent but rather irritable man, his anger prompted him to use strongly abusive terms. Mr Thomson had the spirit to take up his hat and quit the court in the midst of the speaker's vehemence.

In the course of the afternoon the Presbytery sent for him, through one of the members, who was also the preacher's warm

friend, Mr. M'Lay of Stichel, and who prevailed on him to return ; still he found them unchanged in their purpose of censure, though no such language as had fallen from Mr. Hall was again employed. He at once protested and appealed to the Synod ; and when the case came before the Supreme Court, Dr. Lawson earnestly took his side, and maintained that he was blameless ; yet the finding of the Inferior Court was confirmed, and he was rebuked by the moderator in the following gentle form : '*I rebuke you, and you are rebuked accordingly,*' the moderator very properly omitting to specify *what the offence* had been ! If the whole Synod had been on board of a ship, and if a storm had burst forth—not to sink the vessel under such an unprecedented cargo of theology, but to *delay* it—what would or could the moderator and his brethren have done ? They must have adopted St. Paul's conclusion : 'Unless ye abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved ;' and thus, throughout the bounds of the Secession, there would have been a *sermon-less* Sabbath from the detention of the ministers ! Perhaps an anecdote told by the witty Mr. Comrie of Penicuick, and applied by him to his own Presbytery, as serving to account for their occasional severity towards students, will explain the rather ungentle mood of the Border Presbytery towards one who had been a student, and was then a probationer, under their superintendence. The illustrative incident referred to a worthy pair in humble life, at the head of a large family. On a rainy day, the man was prevented from going to the scene of his out-doors occupation ; and after a few hours had been wearily spent in looking out for sundry little 'jobs' about the house—knocking a few nails into some crazy pieces of furniture, and in doing so, finding himself very much in the way of his 'better half,' who felt that she was obstructed in her conduct of house affairs, and who was, moreover, far from complimentary upon the 'improvements' which his hammer was effecting,—the forenoon was not over, and yet all his *extempore*

attempts at being industrious and useful were exhausted, and so, too, was his temper, and that of his wife. What was he to do? His wife and he formed themselves into a committee on the question; and the decision was, that the children should be called in one by one, and soundly whipped. The mother had objected, that they were at the time doing nothing 'worthy of stripes;' but she was soon satisfied with the father's reasoning, that it would not be long before they were in fault, and that careful discipline contemplated prevention as well as cure. The chastisement was duly administered, in order that the parents might be delivered from the irksome condition of having nothing to do! Mr. Comrie imagined that presbyteries, when they had little or no business before them, engaged themselves in correcting their students; and the Border court may have had the same reason for dealing severely with one of its probationers.¹

On returning from London, Mr. Thomson was engaged for several months in preaching in Berwickshire, with the exception of a few Sabbaths in Alnwick. The Secession congregation in this town was then without a minister, and his services there

¹ We are aware that it was long and widely believed among ministers of the Secession, that between Mr. Hall of Kelso and Mr. Thomson, during the whole term of their being co-presbyters, there was anything but friendly intercourse. They have been represented as always on the alert to assail each other with sharp and bitter words. It is, indeed, true that Mr. Hall was at times more quickly and unreasonably irascible to Mr. Thomson than to other members of the Presbytery who chose to differ less from his dogmatic views. On such occasions, Mr. T. was not provoked into strife; for it was a purely passionate outburst, which called for no retort, and it would have been foolish to array wit and sarcasm against mere frailty of temper, which was associated with no malice, and inflicted no damage. One day, Mr. H. had knocked at the door of Mr. T.'s house, and the servant had not appeared so quickly as he expected. Instead of repeating his summons, he went to the parlour window, and looking in upon Mrs. T. and others of the family, who were then first apprised of who it was that knocked, he thus accosted them: 'If ye were not going to let me in, ye might have had the politeness to come to the door to tell me.' Mrs. T. hastened to admit him, expressing her regret for the delay; and

were not less acceptable than in other vacancies ; and a call to him was thence subsequently addressed.

Had the Alnwick people got an earlier hearing of him, so as to give him an earlier call, this might have saved him from much perplexity, and other parties from much uncertainty, regarding the Synod's decision, that he should be ordained at Horndean. Neither his judgment nor his sentiments acquiesced in this disposal of his lot. He felt that he was but indifferently adapted for Horndean, which required a large amount of pedestrian exertion almost daily. The congregation was thinly scattered over a wide district ; and in the pastoral visitation of only a very few families or individuals, great distances must be traversed, many hours occupied, and more of walking exercise exacted than Mr. Thomson could afford. A horse would have been an indispensable help ; but this the congregation could not provide. The question of his settlement at Horndean came again before the Synod, and then, as a reason for his reluctance, he mentioned his lameness, along with the people's inability to furnish him with a horse. After several ministers had expressed their views, Mr. Comrie of Penicuik, whose speeches in church courts were remarkably pointed and effective, though often consisting merely of a single sentence, assuring him that if she had not expected that the servant would at once open the door, she would have done so herself. 'It is all palaver, madam ; it is all palaver,' was his reply. On another occasion, in the same manse, he broke out into invective against Mr. T., who, being in his own house, took no notice of it ; but Mrs. T.'s gentle nature was so hurt, that she conveyed to him her opinion that he 'was not treating Mr. Thomson well.' Mr. Hall's answer was, 'If ye kent it, *we* are the better man o' the twa,'—a statement which, if it had been strictly accurate, would not have been much to the purpose, as a justification of rudeness. In such cases there was neither call nor provocation for any retort. Yet between the two ministers there was a cordial friendship ; and Mr. Hall consulted Mr. Thomson regarding various of his designs, whilst the latter was ever ready to be of any service. Mr. H., before publishing '*the sermon*,' visited Coldstream to read the manuscript several times, and to solicit strictures and amendments. Mr. Thomson often affirmed that Mr. Hall greatly excelled in *conversation*.

which he began and finished in the act of rising from his seat, simply remarked : ' You may give the young man a troop of horses ; but he does not wish to go to Horndean ! '

The suspense in which he was kept concerning Horndean does not seem to have been fully removed, until he received calls from Alnwick and Coldstream. The call from the congregation in his native town was given on the 13th June 1805 ; and he was strongly, from the first, inclined in its favour, though his brother Peter (in whose chapel at Leeds he had been preaching during all the Sabbaths of the previous month) earnestly advised him to accept one of the other calls, and warned him against allowing the attractions of his natal soil to have much influence over his judgment in selecting the life-long sphere of his ministerial labours. The proverb of a ' prophet ' having ' no honour in his own country ' was repeatedly urged, as also was the likelihood of the exceptional prophet, who *did* receive honour, soon becoming weary of, and disappointed by, all the local charms and associations to which he had yielded. There could be no doubt that Adam Thomson was, as a preacher, widely and intensely popular in Coldstream, and that none of his *moral antecedents*, or of his social connections, were fitted to modify, far less to reverse, the fond estimate. His boyhood and youth did not rise up to scandalize his subsequent ambition and zeal, in the view of those who had been his companions, and were to be under his pastoral care. Yet, generally, the settlement of a preacher in his native place is repugnant to both parties, and it is specially so, when that native place is a village, or small town, where all his peculiarities of conduct, character, and spirit have been closely scanned and vividly remembered, and where the earliest impressions about him, though unfavourable, must be deep and indelible. Had he, however, been born and brought up in a city like Edinburgh or Glasgow, he might have been ordained over any of the congregations there—even over one in his own street—and still his

hearers would probably have known little or nothing of his past history; just as there, in the future, his 'goings out and in' would be unnoticed among the crowds hurrying on. In cases where the young days of a preacher have, in his native village, displayed an unbecoming levity, and have worn no aspect of piety or even of high moral principle, and still further, when no proofs of a subsequent conversion have been either seen or heard of, his ministry in his native place would have great obstacles to surmount before it could be edifying or agreeable to any party there; and he acts prudently—even if he now be a changed man, and have renounced his former follies and religious indifference—in fixing his pastoral sphere at a considerable distance from the home of his early days. We are not, of course, referring to the spring-time, moral and intellectual, of individuals like DR. CHALMERS; for though this lacked sedateness, gravity, and all the evangelical elements, yet none of its characteristics, either as observed or as afterwards recalled, were of a kind to render his companions and neighbours disgusted at the idea of his becoming their pastor. His boyhood and youth were not marked by the low and coarse levity, the mean trickery, the spiteful mischief, the selfish cunning, and the violation of truth and trust, which may have distinguished some youngsters who are afterwards found in the clerical ranks, and whom, therefore, it would be highly inexpedient to settle for life in the district where those qualities had been exhibited.

On the contrary, it was a very special compliment to Mr. Thomson's unblemished character, as well as to his abilities, that the people among whom he had been reared, and who were familiar with all his ways, habits, and doings, should freely choose and earnestly press him to be their spiritual guide. His father was a venerated elder in the congregation; and to both father and son the prospect of being associated in the oversight must have been delightful. The dissuasive considera-

tions urged by the elder brother failed to inspire a doubt or to produce any hesitation in the mind of the probationer, who, with all his heart, preferred the Coldstream congregation to any other, just as this congregation preferred him to any other preacher. Yet both parties had frequent opportunities to repent of their preference, in the interval between his call and his ordination. In not a few cases, the candidate has preached only once or twice to the people who call him; and they, probably, do not again hear him until he has been ordained as their minister. So far as *their* judgment is concerned, it may be said that they have taken him 'in the dark,' and that he is quite a stranger, unless they possess remarkable powers of penetration and discrimination, and unless the few discourses which they heard from him were pre-eminently characteristic—stamped with all his intellectual and spiritual individualities. Not thus 'suddenly' did the Coldstream Seceders 'lay hands' on Mr. Adam Thomson; but knowing that they had no miraculous endowment for 'the discerning of spirits,' and modestly believing that they, as a congregation, were not above the average sagacity, or quicker and surer than their neighbours in judging of pastoral qualifications, they, in spite of all their enthusiasm from the first about his preaching, resolved to have many opportunities of hearing him. He preached to them for ELEVEN Sabbaths before they 'called' him, and from this to the date of his ordination, he preached to them for other FIVE Sabbaths,—in all SIXTEEN SABBATHS, as a probationer. They were thus permitted to know almost as much about his preaching as they knew about his character and history. Every new opportunity of hearing him—whilst it tested and displayed the vigour and productiveness of his mind—increased their enthusiasm, and confirmed their attachment. Whenever it was announced or expected that he was to occupy the pulpit in the Coldstream 'meeting-house,' crowds of hearers—that were never on other, far less on ordinary occasions, there together—filled the place

and its internal passages and its external approaches. Recent generations have not seen such a vast concourse of people, whose eagerness to hear was not less remarkable than their numbers! It is, indeed, true that several Seceding and other places of worship have, during the last forty years, been instituted both in the town and over the district, and those new places must have drained off not a few of the groups that swelled those old concourses; yet this admitted fact does not serve to detract from the peculiar power and attractiveness of the preaching which, in the beginning of the century, drew far larger audiences than had met before. At that time there *were* few churches in the district; still the Secession meeting-house in Coldstream was far from crowded—was, indeed, rather poorly filled; and for it to be crammed with an overflowing assembly, indicated the presence of a rare fascination. The old people in the congregation were wont to tell how, in the days of Mr. Adam Thomson's preaching as a probationer, they knew whether or not he was to be there from the large or the moderate gathering. A comparison of two old volumes will furnish the most authentic and convincing evidence on this point. One of those books gives the 'collections' received at each 'diet of worship' in the Coldstream meeting-house, from 1798 to 1826, with all the dates regularly entered along with the respective sums, and these being at each entry certified by the initials of the three or four elders who had stood at the collection-plates. This book has several interesting items; such, for example, as its periodical reckoning of the 'bad halfpennies' that had been dropped into the congregational treasury. We see that, on one day of account in 1798, they had amounted to the considerable sum of *seven shillings and sixpence*,—a sum representing no fewer than 180 'bad halfpennies;' yet that these were not largely made up of metal buttons and the other sundries of wilful imposture, is proved by another entry, made in the course of a week or two, that for the 7s. 6d. of bad half-

pennies, the elders had obtained *five shillings* sterling. The objectionable copper pieces must, therefore, have in general been good coin that had been much worn, and its 'image and superscription' defaced, along with several '*harp-halfpennies*' from Ireland, which were less valued in Scotland than so many bits of old iron.

We have not, however, referred to this collection-book with the view of pointing to such items of antiquarian interest. But the two books being of late casually brought together, though in all probability for the first time since they respectively began to be used for their wholly different and independent purposes, a slight glance sufficed to show that, whilst singly they were of no consequence, yet, taken together, they gave a striking illustration of Mr. Adam Thomson's popularity as a preacher. The second volume contained a list of all the Scripture texts on which he had preached, with the dates and places added. On ascertaining from the latter volume the days of his preaching at Coldstream, and on looking into the former volume to find the 'collections' made on those particular days, we cannot but be struck with the large sums then obtained, compared with those raised on preceding or succeeding Sabbaths. Whenever he occupied the pulpit, the 'offering' was more than doubled; and the uniformity of this result on the sixteen Sabbaths of his 'probation' at Coldstream, shows that it could not be traced to any other cause. The *ordinary* collections under his preaching were nearly equal to the quarterly and *extraordinary* ones raised when other men officiated; and the extraordinary collections taken on any of his Sabbaths there, were, indeed, worthy of the term. The sums raised whenever he preached, contrasted favourably not only with all the collections in the same year, but with all in every preceding year. Nor was the contrast to be explained by the supplement of an 'evening sermon;' for, except on the first two Sabbaths, there was no evening service on the sixteen Sabbaths of his probation. The

inference from the contrast is plain and indisputable, that there must have been a far larger concourse of people whenever Mr. Adam Thomson occupied the pulpit ; and the difference in the collection-plates argued a corresponding difference in the pews. In those days hearers were not conspicuous for liberality : the very poorest would have been ashamed to pass the collection-plate without leaving a halfpenny ; the richest were quite satisfied with themselves if they dropped no larger a coin ; and certainly the latter did not give according to the Scripture rate—‘ as the Lord had prospered them’—but according to the standard of their poor neighbours. Hence, in general, a halfpenny represented a hearer ; and the addition of some hundreds of halfpennies represented, not the increased liberality of the average audience, but the presence of so many hundreds of hearers above that average. Thus, the floating traditions about the unusual crowds that attended Mr. Thomson’s preaching at Coldstream as a probationer, are amply confirmed by the accidental collation of the ‘collections book’ and the ‘list of texts,’ whose independent yet united testimony is altogether impartial and decisive. If *popularity* be ‘honour,’ it attended him wherever he went ; and in his native place he received it in double measure.

That popularity was also highly honourable to the public judgment and taste that bestowed it. He had more than the few external accomplishments which have so often sufficed, in the absence of sterling merits, to render a preacher the idol of many congregations. He had the ‘*vox et preterea—multum.*’ His voice was powerful—might, indeed, have seemed too powerful, if it had not been also melodious ; and in its management there was neither the drawl nor the whine peculiar to the day, and he equally avoided the vociferation and ranting which are characteristic of all times. Whatever animation and energy were breathed out by his voice were simultaneously expressed by his ardent face and flashing eyes, and were

naturally developed by, or elicited from, the ideas and sentiments then passing through his mind for enunciation,—since all this excitement of mood, aspect, and utterance resulted unfeignedly from the influence of those ideas and sentiments upon his own nature. Being himself profoundly impressed and moved by these, he communicated them vividly, along with his own emotions, to eager hearers, until the spirit of his sacred theme possessed the congregation, and waves of sympathy swept from pulpit to pews, and back again from pews to pulpit. His preaching was, in substance, purely evangelical and vigorously intellectual; and he devoted to his grand aim of exhibiting and recommending ‘Christ crucified’ all the force and freshness of his soul. His ‘texts’ were invariably selected for their testimony about Christ; and he fixed them all to the cross, as declaring the Redeemer, and as designed to ‘draw all men unto Him.’ His themes were thus of such a transcendent importance and interest, that no intensity in the thoughts and emotions, and no animation in the delivery, could be too great, if only they were genuine. A wish was not unfrequently expressed by congregations, half a century ago, that their ministers would generally give discourses equal, in freshness, fervour, and evangelic fulness, to their own ‘action sermons’ on sacramental Sabbaths. All the sermons which Mr. Adam Thomson preached, as a probationer, were in matter and delivery worthy to rank with the best of those occasional performances.

His personal appearance at that time was, we have heard, highly prepossessing to all, and striking to many. He was of the common stature, and wholly free—then and throughout his long life—from lankness on the one hand, and from corpulency on the other. His figure was symmetrical and compact, framed for activity and endurance, and braced by a vital energy that should mate with the ceaseless enterprise of his spirit, and yet resist the exhaustion and the ‘wear and tear’ which this enterprise entailed. His face had regular features, yet these were

strongly marked, and their outline, whether seen in front or in profile, was distinctly and boldly cut. They had a peculiarly keen, vivid, and resolute expression, which gave a radiance to his dark complexion. In accordance with the clerical fashion of the times, he wore his hair ‘powdered’—a preposterous ornament truly; but he had no ambition to be singular amongst his brethren on such points, and it was less common for young ministers to have black coats than white locks. Such an assumption of ripe heads on young shoulders seems strange *now*, when everything is done to arrest or conceal the appearance of a few grey hairs, and when men of *fifty* counterfeit the dark and unwithered locks of youth, instead of men of *twenty* putting on the signs of venerable age—the ‘snowy honours’ of ‘threescore years and ten!’ In Mr. Thomson’s case, the white head contrasted strikingly with his unwrinkled brow, the untamed fire of his eye, and the free and ardent energy of his whole aspect. With brethren who were a little slovenly, it was not unusual to distribute the powder unequally over their head, leaving patches of black or merely grizzled hair, but scattering heaps of the white dust upon their coats; so that the coats began, like their owners, to put on the appearance of venerable old age! In this, as in all other points about his personal appearance and dress, he was, from first to last, scrupulously neat, both in and out of the pulpit, though nobody could have been less foppish in manner or spirit.

During the period of his probation, representations were made to the Synod that the supply of preachers was too small for the demand. The Synod, finding that there was a scarcity, and believing that it could be traced to the inadequacy of ministers’ stipends, which had continued stationary at the old ‘low figure,’ though the expenses of instruction and living had risen, so that young men were discouraged from devoting themselves to studies for the ministry, issued an address to congregations, calling upon these to be more liberal in their

support of the gospel. That the average stipend was then grievously insufficient, and is even still far too scanty, cannot be denied ; and the Synod acted commendably in calling attention to this general shortcoming ; but it must ever be an extremely difficult and delicate task for the Synod to determine *when, and in what degree*, there is a too limited supply of probationers. It would be cruel as well as unwise for a denomination to stimulate or encourage such a supply of its home preachers as should be greatly in excess of its vacant congregations. Who would break down and make rubbish of a vast mountain, or a whole quarry of marble, in cutting out merely one small figure ? And should a church waste and sacrifice a hundred probationers in providing twenty congregations with pastors ? Yet if any ordained minister cannot, on some Sabbath—either during his holiday absence from his own pulpit, or when he is called to officiate elsewhere—easily find a preacher to take his place, he complains loudly that there is a dearth of probationers, and he seeks to stimulate an additional supply, though he ought to be aware that no young man would devote himself to the long course of varied, costly, and engrossing studies imposed upon every intending probationer, merely for the sake of becoming a day's 'stop-gap' in the ministry of some hundreds of ordained men. It is only when those probationers are, in carefully estimated proportion, too few for the vacant congregations seeking pastors, and not for the occasional wants of congregations having pastors, that attempts should be made to increase the supply. It has often been proposed that those licentiates who have never received a call for the home ministry, should go abroad as missionaries among the heathen ; and with this vast field for them, it has been argued that there could be no impropriety or cruelty in stimulating any excess, since this would have been easily absorbed in the needy, perishing world. But even if the Church had hitherto provided such funds as would have been

adequate for the maintenance of all her uncalled probationers as foreign missionaries, would the arrangement be fair to the young men, and would it conduce to the reputation and success of the cause of missions? This justification of a large excess in that class will not stand a scrutiny, any more than will the allegation that it is necessary or desirable for every vacant congregation to hear scores of candidates, in order that its judgment may be clear, and not perplexed, as to the man to be chosen as a pastor.

We do not know on what ground the Synod adopted the report that there was, in 1805-6, a scarcity of licentiates; at all events, no complaint was ever made about their qualifications; for amongst them were not a few who at once gave evidence of high abilities, and afterwards rose to great distinction. Men of epicurean tastes have long and exact memories for the 'vintage' of some particular years, as yielding wine of rare qualities; so the period in question was noted for sending forth preachers of far more than ordinary excellence. It was often observed, what a number of eminent Secession ministers had been ordained in 1806.

Mr. Thomson, as we have intimated, had no hesitation about the 'call' he should accept. The Synod had ordered his settlement at Horndean; and though he had a high idea, in the case of competing calls, of the value of that court's judgment as being generally dispassionate, unprejudiced, and wise, and believed that the parties concerned would almost always do well to acquiesce in it, yet he held that a *compulsory* decision—one which peremptorily set aside the young man's confirmed views and feelings—was unwarrantable; and he would rather have gone to America than been ordained over any Scottish congregation against all his own convictions and wishes. Dr. Lawson had admirably and unanswerably pled for him, that 'no Synod could have more authority over a preacher than the Apostle Paul had over Apollos; and yet,

when the apostle earnestly wished, and even—as M'Knight and Doddridge understand the original to mean—*entreated* or *importuned* the eloquent preacher to labour in Corinth, still he employed no apostolical authority to enforce his desires and entreaties, when he found that they could not be willingly complied with. “As touching our brother Apollos,” he said, “I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren ; but *his will was not at all to come at this time*, but he will come when he shall have convenient time.” Before long, the state of suspense and trial for all parties was most happily ended. The Horndean people, without resenting their disappointment, transferred their choice from Mr. Thomson to his former fellow-student and friend, Mr. William Lee, who fulfilled all their hopes of a pastor, and whose most frequent and welcome assistant at a Horndean sacrament, for the greater part of half a century, was Mr. Thomson. Leslie and Alnwick congregations were privileged to obtain like-minded pastors, whom they regarded with an affection, esteem, and confidence that were richly deserved. The Alnwick minister, Mr. Paterson, had, among his brethren, a reputation for metaphysics ; yet he dispensed to his people the pure word of life, unmixed by ‘vain philosophy.’ Mr. Thomson’s preference of Coldstream was entire and hearty—a spontaneous and unfeigned response to the call of the congregation ; and he looked forward to his ordination, neither, indeed, without a solemn and overshadowing sense of the relationship which was about to be formed, and of the responsibilities which it would impose, nor without a trembling consciousness of his utter inability, in his own strength, to discharge the many arduous duties required ; but with a vivid satisfaction that all his toil and care were to be for those whom he knew best and loved most, and that, in attending to his pastoral work, he was not to be separated from his kindred and friends, or from the familiar scenes which invested his childhood and youth.

He was unexpectedly, however, only a week or two before his ordination, tried by a heavy bereavement—the death of his brother Peter, at Leeds, in the flower of youth, and in the midst of a great yet growing ministerial success. The birth-tie of brotherhood had been strengthened between them by the sympathetic and confidential intercourse which they kept up in all the years of their childhood and youth under the parental roof; and from an early period, it had been transformed into a dearer, holier, and more indestructible bond by that faith which made them brethren *of* and brethren *in* the Lord Jesus, and by that zeal which animated them to become ministers of the gospel. The one regret which entered into Adam's satisfaction over his approaching settlement at Coldstream—where he would be in the midst of his family and former friends—was caused by the fact that his brother would be far off, and that the large place which the latter had filled in the past associations, and in the current sympathies of the younger, would be a sad blank. Yet the distance between the two spheres of pastoral labour would not forbid occasional meetings and regular epistolary correspondence. Little, however, did the younger brother imagine, when grieving at the space between Leeds and Coldstream, that an immeasurably greater distance was about to divide him from the elder,—a distance which stretched to the other world, and allowed no intercommunication; and this change into total silence took place at a time when the survivor specially needed such aid and encouragement as his departed brother's experience could have supplied. The latter died on the 17th of February 1806, and the ordination at Coldstream had been fixed for the 12th of March. Two of the three Sabbaths that intervened were spent by Adam Thomson in Leeds. On the first, he heard Dr. Jack of Manchester preach to the bereaved congregation; and on the second, he himself occupied his deceased brother's pulpit. From the solemnities investing the death

of a young minister, who was also his own dearly beloved brother, he returned to open his ministry at Coldstream in a deep tumult of grief, yet with a firmer purpose that 'whatsoever his hand found to do, he would do without delay.'¹

His ordination over the Secession congregation in Coldstream took place on the 12th March 1806. Such an occasion

¹ The Rev. Peter Thomson died in the twenty-eighth year of his age, and the seventh of his ministry, leaving a widow and three sons, of whom the youngest was not born until a few weeks after the father's death. The children and their mother returned to Berwickshire, where all who were akin to the deceased were ready to promote their welfare; and foremost among these were the subject of this Memoir and his brother Alexander, who took special charge of their nephews' education and settlement in life. We may, in a few lines, trace the career of the fatherless three. The eldest, Adam, received a medical training, and afterwards went out to India to exercise his profession, but not for some years, in the East India Company's service. He held excellent appointments, however, as an army surgeon. At length his strongest hopes were realized; and the following extracts from one of his letters to his 'uncle, the minister,' will show to whose persevering exertions he ascribed this welcome turn in his fortunes: 'To the Rev. ADAM THOMSON, Coldstream.—*Fort-William, Calcutta, 10th Dec. 1827.*—MY DEAR UNCLE,—Your letter, conveying the joyful intelligence of my appointment to the Honourable Company's Service, was received at Bishnaut. It would be difficult for me to describe with what feelings of delight I read these words: "You are now on the list of the E. I. Company's medical servants." Then were all my anxious cares about future employment, and the miseries of "hope deferred," brought to a conclusion. I was just on the point of quitting Assam for Calcutta to get my discharge, and had applied to my agents to procure a situation for me as surgeon on board ship. I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude to you for the affectionate interest you have taken in my welfare, and your persevering efforts to get me respectably settled in the world. My utmost expectations have been realized; and had my father been still alive, he could not have done more for me in the present instance than you have accomplished. . . . You call my attention to the great importance of religious matters, and I am fully persuaded of the truth of all you have said, and hope I may be enabled to follow your good advice. I have not been in a place of worship for nearly two years, till yesterday I went to the Scotch Kirk, where I heard an excellent discourse. There is a great want of clergymen in India; there are none in the whole kingdom of Assam, and the one nearest to Bishnaut (where I was stationed) is more than 300 miles distant. I have lately read several books on religious subjects, particularly the Rev. Mr. Scott's works. I have often regretted that I did not bring

seldom failed to attract a great gathering from a circuit of several parishes ; and earnest hearers were sure to receive a spiritual entertainment which would have compensated for a more fatiguing pilgrimage and a longer term of withdrawal from worldly business. From the days of the Erskines, the officiating ministers did their best to render ordination-preaching

out a copy of your Sermons [with a Memoir of the Rev. Peter Thomson] ; it is a book which both my brothers and myself ought to have in our possession. . . . Allow me to conclude my letter in the words of my good friend Colonel Cooper, expressed to me in a letter of congratulation after he had read yours : “ What a blessing your uncle is to you ! May such a blessing be long preserved to you, his family, and the world ! ” Six years later—a few months after he had married—his health broke down, and a removal to his native country became indispensable, if, indeed, he had not delayed too long in trying this remedy. He wrote to his uncle Alexander (who had been long resident in London, and commanded the esteem and affection of the many circles that knew him as a model *Scot*), describing the shattered state of his health, intimating the name of the ship in which he and his wife were to sail for London, and hoping that his uncle would be on the look-out for the vessel’s arrival. He expressed a strong foreboding that he would never see his native land, but die on the voyage. His wife, he mentioned, ‘ was likely to become a mother ’ before reaching England, and would thus have a double claim upon his uncle’s kind attentions. In the event of her being a widow when she landed in London, his uncle was requested to arrange for her passage back to India, ‘ where she would wish to reside among her friends, and be supported by the Bengal Military Fund,’ to which her husband had been a subscriber. He closed the letter with an affectionate and solemn ‘ farewell,’ as if under an overpowering presentiment that he would die at sea. But how blind are either human fears or human hopes ! A dark event was before him, but altogether different from what he had imagined. He did reach England, and he was no longer either dying or an invalid, but restored to health ; yet he was a widower ! The vessel in which he and many others were homewards bound was wrecked, and his wife was amongst the majority that perished. He, though unequal for much exertion, clung to a plank, and the sagacity of a dog was manifested in supporting his head above the waves. Not the least wonderful circumstance in this providential rescue was, that his compulsory bath of *ten hours* in the sea proved quickly and thoroughly *curative*. He was afterwards much with his ‘ uncle, the minister,’ in Coldstream, residing for months at a time in the manse family, where, to distinguish him from others of the same name, he was always spoken of as ‘ Adam, the doctor.’ By and by he re-entered the married state, his partner being Miss Susan Fulton of Hatchednize, near Coldstream, a

the unfurling of a 'banner,' and the blowing of a 'trumpet of no uncertain sound,' on behalf of a pure and full gospel, and a scripturally constituted and regulated church. Yet the services were then far less minutely distributed than at present, when the sermon, the charges to the new pastor and to his flock, the prayers, the reading of the psalms to be sung, and even the pronouncing of the benediction, are respectively assigned to so many members of Presbytery. Formerly one, or at most two ministers, undertook the entire programme, and their brethren were mere hearers,—except at a stage in the proceedings when they silently joined the officiating member in 'laying the hands of the Presbytery' upon the young pastor's head. Nor did the great audiences ever complain that the services were either dull or superficial, lacking variety, or a uniform depth of thought and sentiment. It may, indeed, be doubted if, in our day, when such services are shortened as well as divided among several speakers, hearers listen with the old eagerness of interest: certainly the former crowds do not now attend; and this indicates, in congregations, a declining satisfaction with them, though it is probable that a return to the former arrangement of fewer speakers and

young lady of singular beauty and amiability, whose presence surrounded him with all the home-happiness which his gentle nature could thoroughly appreciate, and who has now for many years mourned his loss. His constitution had been seriously injured by his residence in India, and he died before he had passed his prime.

Of his two brothers, George and Peter, we have to make the sad record that the former was *drowned*, and the latter, who had emigrated to America, was killed by a railway accident. Peter, the youngest, was the only one that left a family to perpetuate his father's name.

Albion Chapel was, during Peter Thomson's brief ministry, in flourishing circumstances, but afterwards it rapidly declined; and at length the building was sold to the Independents, who invited the celebrated Richard Winter Hamilton—then a mere youth—to be their pastor. In Mr. Hamilton's ordination services, a pointed and pathetic reference was made by his relative, Dr. Winter of London, to the marble tablet on the chapel wall, placed in commemoration of Mr. Thomson's faithful labours and premature

longer services, would fail, in this intractable generation, to bring back the immense crowds, and to revive their keen attention. In the midst of the solemn ceremonies by which Mr. Adam Thomson was set apart to the ministry, recollections of his brother must have been painfully vivid; for, through a rare coincidence, that brother had—seven years before, in the same ‘meeting-house’ at Coldstream, and with similar ceremonies—been ordained as pastor of a congregation at Whitby! It had been found inconvenient, perhaps impracticable, for the Border Presbytery to travel to Whitby; hence, in his native place, which was also the ‘seat’ of the Presbytery, Mr. Peter Thomson was invested with the charge of a distant and absent people. He had knelt for the ‘laying on of the hands of the Presbytery’ on the very spot where his brother was now being solemnly bound to the ministry by the same rite; and of the great crowd that now attended, several hundreds had been present on the previous occasion. Among these were the near relatives of the two young ministers. Their venerable father, who had watched and promoted their ‘upbringing,’ rejoicing over all the developments of their youthful promise, would be a deeply interested spectator of

death. From this period, Mr. Hamilton and the subject of our Memoir were specially interested in each other, and they soon became warm friends.

It is worthy of mention, that a proposal, made by Peter Thomson only a few weeks before his death, was widely adopted. A day of thanksgiving for the victory at Trafalgar had been appointed by the Government, and Mr. Thomson inserted a letter in the *Leeds Mercury*, urging that, on that day, a collection in all the churches and chapels throughout the kingdom should be made ‘for the widows and orphans of those who had died in the cause of their country.’ The suggestion was taken up by the managers of the ‘Patriotic Fund,’ who sent circular notes to magistrates; and these laid the proposal before the clergy of all denominations. The result was, that a splendid sum was raised, to be wisely distributed among the classes that, in the war, had lost their bread-winners. The young and humble Secession minister at Leeds was entitled to say, in a letter to his brother, ‘I reflect upon this as one of the most extensively useful and benevolent actions I have ever been enabled to perform.’

the first ordination ; and when, seven years later, he witnessed in the same place the ordination of the second son, he would be full of oppressively sad thoughts about the elder son's brief ministry, which had just prematurely closed ; and the scene remembered would become so vivid as to take the place of that scene which was before his eyes. This, too, would be the experience of the younger son during his own ordination in 1806 ; and his mind ever and anon turned back to the ordination of 1799, and passed along many lines of association with his brother, to be absorbed in grief for the dire event which recently took that brother out of the world. Yet, though the memory of the departed interfered to prevent his attention from being continuously engrossed with the weighty responsibilities he was undertaking, it forthwith and for long reinforced his energies and motives for prosecuting his ministry, and the voice from his brother's grave stimulated him to work with all his might.

On the following Sabbath he occupied what was now his own pulpit. It was then unusual for a young pastor to be 'introduced' to his flock by some clerical friend, who should take the forenoon service. His ordination was held to have opened his way into the pulpit, and to have given him a fraternal recognition in the presence of his people with sufficient plainness. Without any further ecclesiastical etiquette, he began his public ministrations,—the texts for his two discourses being, 'Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel : therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me' (Ezek. iii. 17) ; and, 'Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command before thee : be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them' (Jer. i. 17). There are fastidious hearers who dislike when a minister—especially a young one—applies to himself a Scripture designation like that of 'watchman,' or that which has got into

everyday use, viz. 'pastor.' They say that, in the apostolic age, such terms were truly descriptive, in reference both to the wants of the people and the gifts of their instructors. The former were dependent upon the latter for knowledge as to what they should believe and do ; and they were dependent to an extent which a modern Christian cannot realize. They were not yet in possession of the New Testament canon, and may only have had one hasty reading of a separate Gospel or an Epistle ; and though they had the Old Testament, yet the oracles from Sinai were shrouded in much darkness until the light shone forth from Zion, and the Christian Scriptures were given to elucidate as well as to complete the Hebrew ones. The grand theological library to which all Christians in our country have a free and constant access, was, in every department, from the simplest catechism or manual up to the elaborate treatise, unformed. Nearly all the spiritual instruction which the primitive believers received came from apostolic preaching ; and, truly, they had not 'many fathers.' They had been converted whilst hearing the apostles, and it was through the same agency that they were edified, consoled, and sanctified. In such circumstances, well might the apostles be called *pastors*, since they alone, and with almost no collateral help, furnished all the nurture, guidance, and protection which the companies of the faithful enjoyed. If any hearer neglected, on the Lord's day, to hear the gospel preached, he threw away a precious opportunity for 'growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ;' nor could he allege, as is now often done by those who stay at home when they should have been attending the public ordinances, that he was profitably employed in reading or in musing upon some sermons of transcendent value. He had no substitute for the preacher's living voice ; and the blessings which he needed came, along with his 'faith,' through 'hearing' rather than through reading. No designation for the FIRST preachers

could be too strong, in expressing what they were and what they did to their flocks, with little or no help from other instrumentality; and certainly the comprehensive figure of 'pastors' conveyed no exaggerated idea of their office and work. In our day, however, there are many teachers of Christianity co-operating with preachers; and saving and sanctifying lessons are obtained through reading as well as through hearing. By reading, a man may daily place himself under the tuition of the noblest of our Christian sages, whose words will be of quickening efficacy for many generations. In his own home, and during any leisure hour, he can hold communion with the greatest men and the wisest masters 'in Israel,' and receive the richest instructions which sanctified genius could offer. But, unfortunately, the vast majority of the church-going population neglect to avail themselves of our country's splendid theological library; and their religious knowledge comes mainly from their 'hearing.' They are almost as largely indebted, for Christian training and instruction, to an evangelical ministry, as were believers during the apostolic era before a religious literature was formed. Why, then, should not ministers still be regarded as 'pastors?' It is also an undoubted fact that those Christians who earnestly, for several hours each day, seek to profit by the ablest religious writings, are yet among the foremost in appreciating the ministerial office, and among the most punctual in waiting upon the ordinance of preaching. Nor do they make any invidious comparison as to whether it is through *reading* or through *hearing* that they obtain larger accessions of knowledge, and are influenced by profounder thoughts, more sublime speculations, and more thrilling sentiments, though they may be conscious of a more memorable illumination and excitement during ten minutes, over the page of some great Christian thinker, than they had experienced throughout many lengthy sermons from highly popular preachers. The pulpit is still, within the Church,

the main educating agency, as it is the grand evangelizing agency within the world ; nor, in either sphere, is it likely to lose its pre-eminence, but to turn seeming rivals into real helpers. The religious press will support instead of supplanting it, and will become such a reinforcement as the *Epistles* of Paul were to his *preaching*. The non-religious press has always been its foe ; but how innocuously, let the many centuries tell !

Mr. Thomson cherished the highest ideas of the importance of the office to which he had been ordained ; and whilst earnestly imploring divine aid and encouragement as indispensable, not only to success, but even to fidelity, he resolved to devote all his time and energy to ministerial duties. He would ‘magnify his office’ by throwing his whole soul into its functions and designs. He knew how much an evangelical and earnest ministry was wanted in his own district and throughout Berwickshire. The great change which a later generation exhibited, and which happily is still maintained, in the prominent characteristics of the *Merse* clergymen belonging to the Kirk, had not been accomplished,—did not seem to be begun, or even to be promised, in 1806 ; but in the beginning of the century, those clergymen were, in their views, aims, and spirit, widely separated from their successors, as if by an interval of centuries, and as if this interval had been occupied by some church revolution not less sweeping than that of the First Reformation. They were thoroughly ‘Moderate’ in doctrine ; and in being so, they were virtually, though negatively, *Socinian*, and they contented themselves with teaching such morals as did not transcend the parish constable’s standard. They tested the fitness of those who applied for admission to church-membership and the Lord’s table by asking, ‘*Which is the Eighth Commandment ?*’ or by more simply prompting them to repeat, ‘Honour to whom honour, fear to whom fear.’ They did not recognise *sin*, except where they found vice or crime ; and

in reference to salvation for the souls of those who lived so decently as not only to keep out of prison, but to be unmarked by social censure, they derided it, and its achievement by 'Christ crucified,' as among the delusions of 'Methodism,' which invested the respectably good with an imaginary burden of fearful guilt, in order that they might be transported from the depths of despair into elevated rapture, by an equally fabulous deliverance. Their preaching consisted of such homilies as might have been founded on texts from Solomon's 'Proverbs;' and the doctrine of a wiser than Solomon was never employed to give spirituality of meaning to the utterances of the royal moralist, whose prudence and sagacity were rendered gross and carnal; for the 'Moderatism' of that era was a law of universal gravitation—bringing down to the earth everything on which it looked, and making the spiritual earthy, and the earthy worldly. They never exhibited all right conduct as rooted in the regenerate, believing, and loving heart, and thence springing and growing up to meet the will and to promote the glory of Christ and of 'His Father, and our Father!' The 'good works' which those superficial expounders discussed were in every respect miserable failures; and, apart from their fatal wrong-doings and shortcomings, they were wanting in the proper motives and in the true ends; yet they were preached in the place of Christ's perfect righteousness! The 'Moderatism' of the Merse clergymen was conspicuously active beyond their district—it was often manifested in the General Assembly, where it strengthened, and in turn was itself strengthened by, the predominant policy of that church court. The Merse brethren were specially dear and trusty to 'Jupiter' Carlyle, though he did not spare his jests at their occasional rusticity. They were among his steadiest supporters when he railed and voted against missionary enterprise. He mentions, in his *Autobiography*, how strongly and unitedly they rallied around him in the debates that grew out of Home's 'Tragedy

of Douglas,' and related to such points as the propriety of a Presbyterian clergyman writing a play for the stage, and of many of his ministerial brethren going without disguise to witness its performance at the theatre. The Merse brethren recognised a glory, and no scandal, reflected on the Church from the circumstance that one of her ministers had produced a dramatic work which their bad taste placed on a level with Shakspeare's masterpieces. Without hesitation or scruple, they vindicated the attendance of clergymen at the theatre to see the performance of 'Douglas;' and they expatiated on the instruction which was thence to be derived by the clergy, though the Rev. John Home's tragedy was nearly as defective in moral as in poetic and dramatic power, and though the two or three hours spent in seeing it acted, and in extracting from it all that was of didactic value, could scarcely have been occupied more idly. The Merse champions of 'Douglas,' however, may have been persuaded that the play was not more wanting in evangelical views and sentiments, and not poorer in virtuous lessons, than were their own average discourses! Was not the ranting speech, 'My name is Norval,' etc., more impressive and not less edifying than their standing eulogies on the 'good man' who honoured the British law and law-givers, supported existing institutions, and 'meddled not with those that were given to change?' From 1784, for nearly a generation, Moderate preaching, having rejected all strictly evangelical truth, and lost every saving power and aim, had reached the extreme of inanity; and the sermons provided for the kirks of the Merse were among the feeblest and the dullest. These Border productions were, generally, not less mean in thought and style than they were worthless in theology; and they were recited as coldly and monotonously as if the 'beadle' had been employed to give them voice by tugging at the 'rope' with which he was wont to ring the kirk-bell! There might be one or two exceptional cases of higher and more earnest

pulpit talent ; yet their superiority was merely superficial—belonging to the pen and the tongue, and showing a more correct and elegant style of composition, or a less slovenly method of recitation. Their hearers might be less drowsy, but they received no more profit as a reward for their more wakeful mood.

The state of things in Berwickshire would have been far worse if, in several parishes, the Secession had not sprung up, to afford the regular dispensation of a full and pure gospel, and the communion and discipline of a free yet orderly church. Congregations were soon formed to enjoy these privileges ; yet the influence of the Secession extended beyond the pale of its professed adherents, and not a few families and individuals that declined to quit the Kirk and its lifeless ordinances, embraced every opportunity which was allowed by the few and the brief services in the Kirk, of attending the Seceding instructions and devotions. They were seldom absent from the extra ‘diets’ of worship among Seceders ; and on many a Sabbath, when their own minister had ‘huddled up his work, and closed the scene,’ they had time and inclination to join the Seceding audience, and listen to the concluding half of an earnest discourse. They did not like to offend their own minister, and they appeared in their pews whenever he was in his pulpit ; but on learning that some Moderate neighbour or stranger was about to take his place, they did not scruple to wend their way to the meeting-house to enjoy the unabridged services. In rural districts, a Seceding church was, at that period, rather a refuge for those who were intensely dissatisfied with Moderate doctrine, rule, and fellowship, than a proselytizing station, where means were in operation to turn adherents of the Kirk into malcontents, aliens, or enemies, and to empty the whole Kirk into the ‘conventicle.’ Secession ordinances were established and administered with the view of providing for souls that were pining for want of gospel truth, and for consciences that were aggrieved by encroachments

upon their liberty, and not with the design of gaining converts from the indifferent. Nor did the Moderate clergy of that date ever dream of preparing to meet the evangelical zeal of the new sect with any kind or manifestation of rival zeal; they were too careless to offer any resistance but that of *inertia*. They were not inclined to adopt a policy of intolerance for the arrest or suppression of the Seceding enterprise; still less did they attempt, by a more faithful and fervid preaching of *Christ crucified*, to neutralize the pulpit power displayed by the ministers of the new party. It was not until a generation had passed that gospel zeal and powerful preaching arose within the Establishment, and put forth their influence upon the population that attended the Border kirks. Though it was in the rural parish of Kilmany, and not in Glasgow, that Chalmers experienced the blessed change which typified and heralded the grand regeneration which the Moderate institution was about to pass through, yet, generally, the change took place in towns earlier than in country districts. In the city pulpits of the Establishment Christ's saving truth was eloquently proclaimed, when it was ignored in those of the Merse. Nor, for long, in rural towns were the Sabbath evening discourses of Seceding ministers encountered by rival services in the Kirk. A parochial pastor saw many of his own people regularly joining their Seceding neighbours in attending upon those discourses; and though he would far rather have had them stay at home, and keep away from the infection of the 'fanatical' synagogue, still he would not trouble himself to provide any counter attractions. The lighted meeting-house, to which so many flocked, contrasted with his own kirk, which was as dark and still as the church-yard around it. In not a few of the rural churches there never had been any gleam of artificial light, except from the 'beadle's' lantern, when making his way up to the steeple to ring the Sabbath morning bell in winter, or when searching in some of the gloomy aisle-pews for the 'hand-spokes,' or other articles

of his burying function ! Down to the second quarter of the nineteenth century, when the National Church was 'favoured' with a glorious revival, her clergy had not sought to rival their Seceding brethren either in the evangelical qualities or in the frequency of their preaching ; but from the date of that revival they abandoned their dull essays on 'virtue,' substituting the most animated and impressive gospel sermons ; and the delivery of these they no longer confined within the old 'canonical hours,' for they preached 'in season and out of season,' and even on the Sunday evenings, which the Seceders alone had hitherto thus appropriated to congregational devotion and instruction. When the services in the Kirk became both as evangelical and as frequent as they had always been in the meeting-house ; and when, too, they engrossed the very same Sunday evening hours which the Seceders of the district had long employed,—we cannot wonder that some observers concluded that party spirit was a large ingredient in the novel zeal, and that they 'preached Christ even out of envy and strife,' though the simple fact that Christ *was* preached, from whatever motive, would have received St. Paul's emphatic congratulation. It was just, however, and not merely charitable, to believe that their motives for beginning to preach with the frequency of their Seceding neighbours were purely generous ; and certainly it was *then* much easier to give our Churchmen credit for the absence of party spirit, than at a subsequent period, when, in carrying out their Church Extension scheme, they often acted as if they wished not only to 'enter into the labours' of Seceders, but to push or starve these Seceders out of the field in which they had long and resolutely toiled, until its wild and barren aspect was changed, and to plant 'Chapels of Ease' in closest proximity to Dissenting chapels ; so that hearers for the *new* buildings might be drawn from the *old*—not less than from the population which had hitherto kept aloof from all Christian ordinances and churches !

Mr. Thomson's sphere in the Border district was wide and important, for *there* the Secession was a 'light shining in a dark place;' and it had now become his appointed charge to keep that light pure and bright,—to hold it aloft, and to spread it abroad. Assured that the chief function of the ministry with which he had been entrusted was *preaching*, he resolved that this should be attended to with all his 'heart, soul, mind, and strength,' and with a constant appreciation, both of the incomparable grandeur of its *end*—the salvation of many souls, and the transcendent value of its *means*—the exhibition of the Bible truth about Jesus Christ. He cherished the deepest reverence for the 'treasury' which contained that saving truth, as it had been presented both in starry prefiguration and in noon-day revelation; and as a close and unwearied student of the Bible, he never failed to find 'things new and old:' *old* doctrine, yet neither obsolete nor familiar, but with charms ever new and fitted to surprise; and *new* doctrine, that sprung from the old, and was not less venerable; for with the Holy Scriptures, as with their Divine Author, 'one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.' In his view, the gospel—and the Bible histories and prophecies amongst which the gospel lies, and from which it receives so many converging lights—possessed an inexhaustible wealth, variety, and freshness of meaning which he longed to communicate, by faithful and vivid interpretation, to his people. Instead of proposing to draw from the Bible only a few discourses, which, with slight variations, he should repeat during the whole of his ministry, and which would leave the vast and rich field of revelation unreaped, ungleaned, and even unexamined, he felt that there were, literally, innumerable themes from the Bible attracting his notice, and that each of these demanded his most careful and energetic treatment in an *original* discourse. He liked to have several subjects all at once in his mind, where they grew like seeds in the ground, drawing nourishment, at every spare

moment, from thoughts and musings which might otherwise have been wasted. During a short ride into the country, they might all be advanced some stages in their development, or one, that happened to absorb the quickening influences of the time and the scene, might shoot into maturity. When from such an informal premeditation of his theme he proceeded to the task of composing for the pulpit, he was not satisfied with making this the mechanical and easy exercise of finding diction for the various ideas that had gathered together and grown in his mind, though thereby much more than a skeleton discourse would have been produced. The hardest labour of study, so far from being ended or greatly relaxed, was then only beginning ; and this could not have been the case if he were merely setting himself to find an array of words. It could not have cost any severe strain upon his intellect to provide language for all the thoughts that had accumulated in silent musings, since he had, in his memory, a peculiarly rich and ready vocabulary, which seemed, indeed, to consist of happily constructed clauses and sentences, rather than of single and separate words. The toil which he undertook was of another and a harder kind : it was not to get words for the trains of ideas that had been suggested and arranged ; but, starting from these as from a level beneath which he must not fall, he sought to mount into a higher range of thought, whence the subject might be shown in grander and more varied aspects and relations. Had he been contented with giving expression to the ideas which were previously in his mind, his people would probably have received them as fresh and interesting ; but he laboured to reach such as should be new and striking *to himself*, assured that these would prove far more potent with his hearers. He did not resort to *extempore writing*, which, generally, is feebler and duller than *extempore speaking*,—having less of passion, and no more of judgment, since the *hand* is more remote than the *tongue*, both from the head and the heart. He did not write

down the first thoughts that came, by the prompting of the law of association for the time, to fill up the many moulds,—the ‘firstlies’ and ‘secondlies’ of ‘head’ and of ‘particular’ into which he had divided his subject; nay, he even declined to write down the more select and valuable ideas which had gathered, assimilated, and multiplied themselves in intervals of genial musing; but by means of these, and the course which they had taken, he sought to rise into a more elevated track of thought, whence he might present more commanding views of his subject—views which he had never before entertained or anticipated, and which, therefore, should the more strongly surprise and impress the audience. When he finished the writing of an elaborate discourse, there would be many conceptions and illustrations that had been altogether new and unexpected to himself. Instead of *stooping* from his own level to communicate the common and familiar views of truth stored up in his mind, he *arose* from that level, to pursue fresh and striking forms and combinations of the everlasting gospel, which has an absolute identity of essence, yet an infinite variety of development, and to enable his hearers to share in the glow and rapture of the communion which he had just held with truth. He had, however, an equally strong desire to avoid all such novelties of thought and phrase as would tend to change or to veil that old truth.

Not only did Mr. Thomson labour with zeal in the preparation of his discourses, but, soon after his ordination, he determined to multiply the times of his preaching. In not a few of the less thinly peopled districts of his congregation, there were aged and infirm persons who could not on Sabbath travel the distance to Coldstream to hear sermon. Some had not been in the house of God, even on a Sacrament-day, for long years; and those who mourned over this privation of privilege were to be pitied,—yet less than others of the aged in their neighbourhood, who were perfectly satisfied with their condi-

tion, because they were wholly indifferent about the gospel and the salvation of their souls, and did not avail themselves of prayer and the reading of the Scriptures at home. To take preaching to such as could not go to church, was an early enterprise of the Secession minister of Coldstream; and he established a week-day service once a month in each of four villages—Leitholm, Birgham, Wark, and Cornhill. The hearers, who were of all ages, met in some convenient cottage, often filling the ‘but’ and ‘ben’ and the passage between; and the preacher’s voice easily reached them all. He took a special interest and delight in such meetings; and whilst adopting the conversational style and tone, he spoke with extreme animation, as if vividly recollecting how seldom some of the old men and women before him, as well as some of the young and middle-aged who were in delicate health, had the opportunity of listening to a sermon. Standing, too, on the cottage floor, on a level with, and closely surrounded by, his hearers, he felt that he was brought into more unceremonious and immediate contact with their thoughts, experiences, and interests, than when in church he occupied the pulpit, which was so far isolated from, and elevated above, the pews. The road to each of the preaching outposts commanded wide and varied views of scenery; and these, as he rode or drove along, had an exhilarating and stimulating influence; whilst the sight of the rural occupations pursued—according to the season—in the fields, furnished him with such illustrations as quickly impressed the audience.

House-baptisms in country districts were of very frequent occurrence, though Mr. Thomson both held and enforced strict views about the propriety of the baptismal service being performed in the presence of the whole congregation, except in cases in which it would have been highly inconvenient or dangerous for mother or child to leave home and appear in church. He regarded the sacrament, which gives to an infant

its earliest admission within Christ's church, as a solemn pledge, on the part not only of the parents, but also of the minister, elders, and all the members of the church, that they will carefully provide for that young one's 'godly up-bringing;' and that pledge, he thought, should not be given in a corner, but in the sanctuary, where all parties were present. In all cases, when mother and child could safely and conveniently appear in church, he insisted on the baptism being before the whole congregation, and would permit no shame-faced *father* (for the mother never was so cowardly) to hide himself, but urged him to think more about his parental responsibilities and the divine scrutiny, than about a staring assembly. Still, as many families belonging to the congregation lived at the distance of several miles from church, house-baptisms were often unavoidable. On an average, they took place much more frequently than once a week; he began with two in the first week of his pastorate. Nor did he allow the service—from its being transferred from the church to the house—to be changed into a brief solemnity in the midst of domestic festivities. He did not allow it to become like a 'grace' before or after a costly tea-drinking. The house was made the scene of a regular 'diet of worship' for a local section of the congregation,—intimation of this arrangement having been made from the pulpit on the previous Sabbath, and all those members who resided in the vicinity, or who desired to be hearers, being invited to attend. The baptismal service was preceded, not only by devotional exercises, and a charge on parental duties, but by a sermon; and all the proceedings were fitted to produce impressions as deep and sacred as resulted from any preaching in the church. Frequently, at the close of week-day sermons at his preaching stations, all the young that had been hearers were gathered around him, and examined on Bible history and doctrine; and during the half-hour spent in this catechizing, their elderly neighbours uniformly remained and listened eagerly.

Early in his pastorate, and for a long succession of years, Mr. Thomson preached every Sabbath evening in his own pulpit at Coldstream ; and though many of his people resided at such a distance that they could not return to this third service, yet their places were more than filled by members of the parish kirk, who attended regularly. He was heard to special advantage in this service ; for his former labours of the day, so far from exhausting his energies, had only left these on the full strain, and in their thoroughly aroused state ; and the interval, which he passed in imbuing his mind with his carefully prepared theme, enabled him to preach with a more intense and sustained animation. From the time that this third service was established in Coldstream, the numerous bands of young people strolling along the country roads, and on the banks of the river, disappeared. To any spectator, who had marked their idle or sportive demeanour, and overheard their talk, it was sufficiently obvious that they had not wandered forth to muse on the creation, and to meditate on the character and will of the Creator, or to join in such conversation as the scenes around them might suggest and the hallowed day would justify ; and it was equally plain that, when they discontinued this Sunday strolling for sitting in church, and listening to a discourse on the highest concerns of their souls, they did what was both proper and profitable. There were, at that time, no philosophers who identified Sunday walks with studies in Natural Theology, and church attendance and sermon-hearing with confinement in a prison-cell and senseless penance.

Much, however, has been said, both by ministers and hearers, against *third sermons* on Sabbath. Robert Hall described them as ‘a device of Satan for killing ministers ;’ though, perhaps, the devil has more to do in tempting ministers to be indolent than in tempting them to be over-zealous ; and he would rather gain an influence over their lives, than bring about their death by any excess in preaching. The mischief which those sermons

have been said to cause to hearers is more indefinite. They, it is alleged, tempt men to neglect their family duties—the examination and instruction of their children and dependents, and also to omit the reading and meditation which their own spiritual well-being requires. If forenoon, afternoon, and evening be spent in church, only the ‘odds and ends’ of the day are left for self-improvement and family training, and the church swallows up the influential and delightful home-school. The third sermon, too, is said to be a sermon more than many hearers can profit by: itself is disregarded, or it expels from memory and reflection one of the other two, or perhaps it mars the good effect of all the three. This allegation assumes that the capacity of hearers is childish small:—it says that three sermons, delivered after the intervals of hours, cannot, in their outlines and main lessons, be admitted and assimilated to the mind, or the memory will take in and retain an overload which reflection cannot digest, and which must prove useless, if not injurious! Such compassion is now felt for that slender capacity in hearers, that the cry is to make sermons far shorter as well as fewer. Sermons extending beyond fifteen or twenty minutes, are condemned along with third sermons; yet the hearers, for whose benefit this reduction is urged, must listen to scientific lectures of one and a half or two hours’ length, especially if these performances ridicule Bible history or doctrine!

Third sermons, however, might be defended as necessary to many, and profitable to more. Let all who are concerned in giving or in receiving family instruction, and who would find this hindered or marred by a third sermon, stay at home; yet surely there are many persons who are not so circumstanced, and *they* are free to attend on that sermon. Reading and meditation might, indeed, be more beneficial than a third sermon; but there are far too many who, if they remained at home, would read little, meditate less, and derive from both

the least possible good, and they would act wisely in going to the third sermon. Then, again, a third sermon is provided, not so much that all may hear three sermons, as that many who have been waiting upon the young and the sick, or otherwise detained, may be allowed to hear two sermons, or even one. Without the evening sermon, not a few would have heard only one sermon, and others none at all; and having been kept in the chamber of affliction, they find how 'amiable are the tabernacles of the Lord of Hosts,' for which their 'souls had fainted;' and they listen to the preaching of the gospel eagerly, 'as the hart panteth after the water-brooks,' instead of regarding it with a sense of satiety.

Mr. Thomson had yet another reason, and that by no means the least weighty, for commencing and long continuing a third service in Coldstream each Sabbath; and this was, that those who were not within the pale of the Secession might have an opportunity of hearing the evangelical doctrine which the 'Moderates' of that period, instead of preaching as scriptural and saving truth, were wont to stigmatize and ridicule as Methodistical cant and rant. Kirk members, however, delighted in the abused doctrine, because it reached and ruled all the sympathies, emotions, and aspirations of their grand yet disordered nature, and because it drew thence an unequivocal response in testimony of its truth and importance. The 'meeting-house' was filled during the third service—there being a large attendance of those who, that day, had been starved on 'dry morality,' and who were amongst the most eager for the 'gospel feast.' Times are happily changed; and now in Coldstream, as in many other country towns, there is no necessity for the *hospitable* institution of a Sabbath evening service to exhibit the riches of the gospel to those who had merely, in their own churches, been tantalized by the 'beggarly elements of the law.'

Thus Mr. Thomson had five or six preaching services every

week ; nor should we forget the very great number of times that he also preached in neighbouring congregations on sacramental week-days. On an average, he—for a long term of years—preached daily. In the beginning of his ministry, he not only carefully premeditated all his discourses, but wrote them out in full, with the utmost attention to force and freshness in the diction, as well as in the thinking ; and he undertook the additional toil of committing them to memory, so that he might deliver them with the freeness and animation of an *extempore* address. It may be remarked, for the benefit, and probably to the surprise, of such persons as have never got into the practice of committing to memory their written thoughts, that, according to the experience of the vast majority of those who have given it a fair trial, it soon becomes a light and rapid task. In the case of those who begin to commit only a short time after they have finished writing, and whilst the ideas are still fresh in the mind, the toil is peculiarly slight and brief ; and a minister will then master, in quarter of an hour, a discourse which would take him more than an hour to recite ; and this time, for the getting of his subject and its most prominent ideas transferred to, and impressed vividly upon, his mind, no speaker could grudge as wasted. The objection which has often been brought against the practice, that it makes the preacher akin to the schoolboy ‘getting his task by rote,’ and that neither he nor his audience can take any interest in the ‘lesson,’ is unreasonable and against experience. The *actor* can throw his whole soul into a character which he has personated thousands of times, and into the many lines of soliloquy and dialogue which he has recited as often ; and though his part abounds in off-hand sentences, and broken and impetuous exclamations, he does not repeat these in the manner of a schoolboy. He bawls forth ‘Richard’s himself again!’ as if in the vehement outburst of an enthusiastic courage and confidence which had never before found ex-

pression. If the habit of delivery from memory have all the natural freedom and energy required for the stage, it is sure to possess enough of such qualities for the pulpit. It gives no schoolboy timidity, or any fear lest, by failing to recollect some small word, the preacher might lose the whole discourse—as in the old proverb about the ‘want of a nail’ in the shoe resulting in the loss of the ‘horse.’ He is far less of a slave to words than his *extempore* neighbour, who keeps catching painfully both at words and ideas, and often finds ideas without words, and still more frequently words without ideas, and is not seldom in the further predicament of confounding naked ideas with empty dresses! Nor even, though words were to escape the memory of the former preacher, does he quit hold of his subject, in its main divisions and illustrations, far less in its scope, aim, and spirit; and he would then be sustained through all hesitation and stammering, until he either recovered the forgotten words, or found others to bridge over the gulf. In the great majority of cases, however, the short and easy task of what is called ‘mandation’ gives as sure a hold over the discourse, as if all the words lay before the preacher’s eye, instead of being trusted to his memory; and he could not stumble less, if he were merely *reading*. Sixty years ago, the *reading* of sermons from the pulpit was altogether unknown in the Secession; and few, if any, ministers of this denomination ever wished to adopt it, even in *lectures*, which, being chiefly intended to *instruct*, might be read more properly and with far less injury than sermons, that aim mainly to *impress*. A plain exposition, designed to communicate sound and clear views, though not refusing at the same time to be impressive, would be far more suitable for reading, than a sermon which sought in the first place deeply to stir the hearers, though, of course, it also attempted to enlighten them. But this not unfair compromise—the reading of lectures, and the free delivery of sermons—was never proposed by a Seceding preacher.

The subject of our memoir, in order that he might preach with the frequency he desired, adopted a third method of preparation, which was then untried among his brethren in Scotland, though it had been followed by not a few of the evangelical Dissenting ministers in England. The one with which he had begun—that of writing and committing to memory—could not be continued, if he were to preach thrice on Sabbath, and often in the course of the week; and on giving it up, he never dreamed of resorting to *reading*. His new method was to premeditate fully on the subject chosen, and to follow out, in his mind, all the ideas and illustrations, arranging and adjusting them into an animated body of thought. Of this he sketched on paper a minute ‘skeleton,’ and kept it before him to attract and assimilate new suggestions, and to receive stronger life. He trusted that the hour of delivery would supply all the language which was unwritten; nor was his confidence misplaced. Under this new method of preparation, he preached with increased energy and fluency, and yet had saved several hours each day for ‘abounding’ in pastoral duties. Still, apart from the great superiority of this *third* method in his and in a few other cases, we are doubtful about the propriety of its general adoption. We do not forget that lawyers and senators largely avail themselves of it, and that the most powerful and magnificent of the pulpit orators of the nineteenth century—ROBERT HALL—followed it almost invariably, though, had he pursued the plan both of writing and then committing to memory his discourses, these would have adorned our theological literature with its grandest and most beautiful contributions to sacred rhetoric. It must be admitted that Dr. Thomas Chalmers—the most powerful preacher in Scotland—did not fairly try how he could preach from premeditation without writing. He attempted it but once or twice, as if it needed no training or practice; like the Irishman, who, when requested to gratify the company by playing some very diffi-

cult piece of music on the violin, was not quite sure that he would do it in the best style, as he had never before played on a violin ! As for the first plan, which would have perfectly suited him—that of delivering from memory—he never essayed it, though he might have easily ‘mandated’ all the sermons and lectures which he ever read from the pulpit, or published through the press. Many a poor Seceding minister has committed to, and spoken from, memory, in eight or ten years, more discourses than the eloquent Doctor read and printed during the whole of his life ; and the Doctor, if he had imitated the Seceder, would have put forth vaster influence, and acquired more transcendent fame. He did not preach according to the *first* method ; nor did he give the *third* more than a slight and insufficient trial ; but he slavishly followed the *reading* method, which must have repressed and fettered his vehement genius. If Chalmers, as a reader, accomplished grand feats, what far mightier wonders would he not have done when speaking in accordance with either the first or the third plan ! Had his face been turned upon his crowded audiences, and not upon his paper, he would have ruled them with a new and more immediate power.

In pursuing this third plan of pulpit preparation, Mr. Thomson was enabled to undertake the daily preaching work which he desired ; and he was also left with ampler time and less exhausted strength to attend to the other pastoral functions, the value of which he knew to be incalculable. The organization of a Sabbath school, and the carrying on of a *Minister’s class*, brought him into close relations with the Coldstream juveniles ; and he was soon induced to set up similar schools for communicating scriptural knowledge in the various villages which were his preaching stations. His country elders acted as teachers, and the scholars were almost every month examined by himself.

More reliance was placed in those days than in ours, upon

catechetical means of instruction ; and Mr. Thomson not only provided abundant Sunday-school teaching for the young, but he also kept up, for many years, an annual ‘diet of examination’ for the adults who were members or adherents of his congregation—meeting with sections of them at the several preaching stations that were convenient to their dwellings. This mode of congregational inspection and drilling has—along, we fear, with domestic catechising—fallen into disuse ; but it was once highly valued as a means of testing the religious knowledge of adults, and of removing any ignorance, confusion, or error which they might show regarding vital doctrines. It enabled ministers to judge what progress was being made under their pulpit lessons ; and often the maker of eloquent and argumentative sermons was mortified to find that these had failed to lodge any clear ideas of plain truth within the minds of some who had appeared to be intelligent and appreciative hearers. As examiners, they saw that by putting a few questions and suggesting and explaining proper answers, they frequently conveyed far more correct views than their most elaborate preaching had impressed. The Assembly’s Shorter Catechism was the text-book ; and Mr. Thomson’s aim was to render the questions and answers thoroughly understood by all who were familiar with the terms employed in the national manual. Elders, and others in the district, who were possessed of a knowledge that rose above the standard of all such examinations, were regular in attending the ‘diet’—and they took their turn in answering,—with the view of encouraging those neighbours who were less fully prepared for, but stood more in need of, the exercise. In many a family the catechism was taken out of young into older hands, to be diligently studied ; and fathers and mothers might be surprised, as they were engaged in revising their own knowledge of its contents—some wishing that they had the prompt and sure memory which their children displayed. Cases of gross ignorance or absurd blundering

would have appeared at almost every meeting, if the minister had liked to see and to expose them ; but whenever he observed any hesitation on the part of those who were under examination, or any wandering towards a wrong reply, he promptly interfered, not as if to help their answer, but as if to help his own question, by giving it clear and copious explanations ; and thus he sought to prevent them from ever again hesitating or 'speaking unadvisedly' upon the same points. He kept them from the ridicule of their neighbours, though he did nothing to check in their own minds the rising of shame and penitence over their lack of knowledge. Mr. Thomson's chief object was to instruct ; and he found that, in the case of many of the timid, as well as of the ignorant, he succeeded best when he gave both question and answer, and only expected from his people a 'yes,' or a silent assent. Occasionally, indeed, he thought otherwise, when from a rural patriarch he received, not a simple affirmative, but such a striking definition or illustration as would have delighted him, had it been offered by a great theologian or preacher. Sometimes, however, a conceited person was bent on exhibiting his rare acquirements, and was ready to reply by an essay, instead of a syllable ; but Mr. Thomson could adroitly check the pretender, and seal up all his fluency. A still rarer curiosity was the member who was possessed of such a stock of pride in his theological gifts, that he tried, in answering questions, to propose difficulties, with the ill-disguised aim of puzzling and confounding the minister, and of covering himself with glory. Such a 'pupil' as this was 'a thorn in the side' of many a good minister at a diet of examination ; and the latter felt more and more uneasy as his interrogatories came nearer and nearer to the corner where sat the confident theologian primed with hard problems. But Adam Thomson was not the man to be tormented, or even to be annoyed by such a nuisance ; for he had ingenuity and wit to baffle the questioner, and contemptuously to dismiss the ques-

tions as void of interest and importance, whilst he substituted queries of a more practical kind, to which the crest-fallen theologian made replies that needed correction. The displays, however, of such conceit were 'few and far between,' and Mr. Thomson dealt with them in a way which prevented their recurrence.

The exercises peculiar to those examination meetings he regarded as singularly valuable, for they enabled him to ascertain the amount of religious knowledge possessed by individuals, families, and classes under his pastoral charge, and to supply whatever might be lacking ; and he prepared for them with his best care, premeditating the questions and answers that should bring out the clearest and most influential views of saving truth. Since the abandonment of those examination diets for adults, a minister is far less intimately acquainted with 'the state of his flock ;' and often, when visiting those members who have been overtaken by illness, and conversing with them, he is astonished to find them deplorably ignorant or mistaken about the very elements of the gospel system, though they had long been regular, and, to all appearance, earnest and intelligent hearers. Any one of his many discourses to which they had listened with such apparent interest, ought to have made it impossible for them to be in darkness or confusion about the leading principles of Christianity. They 'had ears to hear, yet heard not ;' and all his preaching has increased their responsibility, not their knowledge. He discovers this only when they have been prostrated by sickness, or, perhaps, laid on their death-bed ; and this may be a crisis when, from the pressure of suffering upon soul as well as upon body, he is sorely perplexed how he should attempt to remove the ignorance or error which he has detected. How little he can teach to many when they are stretched on a death-bed, even though he has been startled by a disclosure of their ignorance ! Had the old examinations been continued, he would have had precious opportunities both of testing and of supplementing the religious knowledge of his adult hearers.

In former days the pastor maintained a closer superintendence than at present over his people ; and as this was relaxed, the examinations dropped. If the catechetical drilling of congregations were to be resumed, would church members and adherents of both sexes and of all classes attend as generally and punctually as before ? It would, however, be more interesting to inquire if, on the supposition that all attended, the more accomplished men and women of our generation would acquit themselves upon the Shorter Catechism and the doctrines of Christianity as creditably as their humbler ancestors ? It may be suspected that, before such a congregational examiner as John Brown of Haddington, the representative adults of our day would be slow or inaccurate in their answers. Many a member, with the dignity of a provost, and his wife with the deportment of a 'mother in Israel,' would be caught wandering far away from the sense, as well as the words, of a very plain question ; whilst their hopeful progeny—wearing such an impress of cultivation and refinement as must have overawed the less polished sons and daughters of Seceders in the olden time—would fail to guide them into a right answer.

Mr. Thomson was also zealous in encouraging the formation of local fellowship-meetings throughout the congregation. Within every small sphere in Coldstream, and the country around, he sought to have a praying company, to co-operate with praying families, and with the praying congregation. What are called *congregational prayer-meetings* (meetings to which the whole congregation is invited, but which are attended by only a small proportion of members) were then unknown ; but the several fellowship-meetings were, in respect both of the aggregate numbers attending them, and of the interest and value of the exercises, by no means inferior to the promiscuous gathering which has superseded them.

Mr. Thomson, for more than the first twelve months of his pastorate, continued to live under his father's roof ; but he

removed to form a household of his own, and was married (in August 1808) to Miss Isabella Turnbull, who had been for some time resident at Monilaws, though she was a native of Gifford. Her father, a highly respectable farmer, had died in the prime of life, leaving his widow to rear several sons and daughters, who were afterwards noted, in the districts where they were settled, the former for their strikingly gallant and commanding appearance, and the latter for their beauty and dignity, though all of them had much more important and influential distinctions of character and conduct. Two of the sons followed the medical profession—one in Dunbar, where he was distinguished for skill and the most energetic philanthropy, and where, when fearlessly doing more than his duty [he was ‘dressing’ for the grave a corpse from which relatives and neighbours had fled in terror during the first visitation of *Cholera*], he caught infection, and went home to die in a few hours; and the other at Coldstream, where for about half a century he filled a medical sphere which widened and brightened to the last, and which was closely parallel to the ministerial sphere of his brother-in-law, the subject of our memoir—the one attending to the *spiritual*, the other to the *physical*, well-being of a large portion of the Border community, through the unusual term of fifty years!

Of this Turnbull family, Isabella was the ‘flower’—bountifully adorned without and within, and by grace as well as nature; and in her Mr. Thomson ‘got a wife from the Lord’—a true ‘help-meet’ in all his relations; for she, by modestly and quietly, yet thoroughly and cheerfully, discharging her duties of home management, left him free and undistracted for the performance of his pastoral work, whilst her earnest sympathy gave him a new stimulus. During his many years of uninterrupted health, vigorous activity, and self-reliant habits, she ministered with as entire and constant a purpose to promote his usefulness and comfort, as in his closing term, when age and paralysis had

stricken him, and when she devoted herself to soothe and help him in his affliction, and to anticipate, not only his wants, but the relief which other friends were eager to offer. All the services of her affection attended him—not more unreservedly in the latter stage, when he was dependent on her care, than in the former times, when he possessed an iron constitution and an exuberance of native energy. He was eminently fitted to enjoy the domestic happiness which her loving nature, ‘meek and quiet spirit,’ gentle and graceful deportment, and her wise management of affairs, diffused around him; and the fascination of the home which she blessed was strong upon him, and was more intensely felt at every return from his frequent and distant travels, when he gratefully confessed that he found ‘no place like home.’ To the children, also, who grew up around them, she made it the scene of rare felicity, as well as of diligent training; and sons and daughters, in going forth to the world, bore a vivid memory of the beloved retreat, and looked forward to their return to it with thrills of enthusiastic interest. Instead of checking those hospitable tendencies in her husband, which would have displeased and alarmed many a wife, she seconded his invitations, and made his welcomes more cordial and attractive to the many clerical brethren who visited him. The Secession manse of Coldstream saw, for at least forty years, an almost daily succession of arriving and departing guests for whom often the single ‘prophet’s chamber’ would not have sufficed; yet all met with an entertainment as fresh and genial as if it had been given by a retired family that scarcely ever beheld a stranger’s face; and their pleasant recollections of the professional ability and zeal, and the manly kindness of the minister, were associated with those of the dignified and graceful hospitality of the minister’s wife.

Mr. Thomson repeatedly, under the direction of his Synod, or of the Scottish Missionary Society, engaged, either singly or along with other ministers, in evangelizing tours through certain

provinces of England and Ireland. Those excursions were far from being of a holiday character, though this had been well-earned by his hard work at home, and though he would have enjoyed a leisurely survey of many of the localities that lay in or near his tour. Certainly he did not spare himself, but preached daily after travelling many miles on bad roads. He preached in towns and villages, to hundreds and to mere scores of hearers. In not a few extensive districts he found that there was no evangelical agency ; how little, therefore, could his own passing ministrations do ! He would make a brief and general report of his labours to those Associations that had sent him ; but he took private notes regarding his daily proceedings. Though these were intended to be looked at by himself alone, several extracts from them will be laid before the reader. It should here be mentioned that, in his earliest tour (in 1810), he met, in the north of England, with several Independent and Methodist lay-preachers who were sadly destitute not only of literary but also of theological qualifications, and who rather gloried in their ignorance. He was amazed at the ecclesiastical system, or rather the want of system, which permitted such individuals to pass from the pew to the pulpit, and to become teachers when they needed so much to be learners ; and he was led to think more highly than ever of Scottish Presbyterianism. He was afterwards intimately acquainted with the leading men in the denominations of English Dissenters—the Independents, Baptists, and Methodists,—and knew how admirable were their pulpit labours in general, though a few of their temporary representatives in villages might be poorly accomplished. In 1810 he held narrow views about ‘lay’ and ‘unlicensed’ preaching, and was not prepared to give it almost any tolerance ; and unquestionably, the unlettered men with whom he then met in Yorkshire, were scarcely fitted to convert him to more liberal ideas. Subsequently, however, when he saw the vast work which had to be done in so many corners

of the great home field, and what a petty force of 'labourers' there was, he became ready to welcome lay agency, and was far more anxious that the evangelists should be many, zealous, and able, than that they should be 'licensed.'

We begin with extracts from Mr. Thomson's 'Journal of a Mission to various parts of the counties of Durham and York, undertaken by order of the Associate Synod :—

'At the meeting of Synod in September 1810, there was read a representation, with petition, from the Associate Session of Whitby, giving an account of the deplorable state of religion in many parts of the counties of Durham and York, and requesting that a minister of the gospel might be sent by the Synod to itinerate for a few weeks in these counties, and to preach the glad tidings of salvation to multitudes that had seldom an opportunity of hearing the "joyful sound," and were extensively sunk in ignorance and barbarity. The Synod unanimously agreed to express their high appreciation of the conduct of their brother, Mr. Young, and his session, and with a view to comply as far as possible with their petition, they appointed me to itinerate at present for six weeks in the counties before mentioned.

'In obedience to this order, I set out from Coldstream on the 17th of September. From this date I shall begin the account of my journey; and—merely for my own amusement, should it not be attended with further advantage—I mean to record the different little particulars which I should wish to remember, even although they may have no connection with the principal object of my journey.

'I had given intimation from the pulpit that on Monday I designed to preach and baptize a child at Palinsburn. When I came there, however, in the afternoon, I found that the child, whose parents live at Etal, could not be brought out; and I was obliged to go to Etal, which was several miles out of my way. I had thus, at the very first, to break through a

resolution which I had formed—never to ride at night, as my horse, being very young, could not be supposed to travel safely in the dark. When I reached Wooler, it was about eight o'clock ; and as Mr. R. was not at home, I determined to go on to Roddam. The night was extremely dark, and when at the bottom of a glen, after leaving the public road, about five miles from Wooler, I was rather perplexed at seeing a great light where I was pretty sure there could be no house. The flashing of the light, together with the noise made by a large dog, made my horse become rather restive and unwilling to go on. After proceeding a little farther, I found myself in a sequestered place, where a band of "Tinkers" had pitched their tent for the night. I guessed what they were, from their manner of speaking ; and as I drew nearer, I saw their carts, etc., by the light of the large fire which they had kindled for cooking their supper. I was somewhat more than uneasy, and resolved to make the best of my way. But I had not proceeded many yards, when by the light of the fire I perceived a gate shut against me. I feared that the horse would not allow me to open the gate without dismounting, and in this case I should have been completely at the mercy of a gang of men who have of late been more than usually lawless towards both property and life. I attempted to open the gate and keep my seat. The horse now began to jump, and I to suspect that the Tinkers would see and take advantage of my perplexity ; and I was thus prevented from obtaining my purpose as soon and easily as I should otherwise have done. But after a hard struggle I did succeed ; and without staying to shut the gate, I allowed the horse to give proof of his speed. A little after this I reached Roddam, where I spent a very pleasant evening with my old and worthy friend Mr. Gibson.

‘ Having left Roddam on Tuesday morning, I travelled slowly to Stannington, where, at an inn, I lodged during the night, and came to Newcastle early on Wednesday morning.

Here I preached a sermon at the opening of the Presbytery of Coldstream, which met to receive the Rev. W. Graham and his congregations of Darlington and Stockton into our connection. On the evening of the same day Mr. Graham preached by desire of the Presbytery. . . .

‘On Thursday I came to Sunderland, where I was happy to learn that Mr. Frey, the converted Jew, was to preach in the evening. The Methodist chapel, which is the most spacious place of worship in Sunderland, had been offered to this pious *Calvinist* on the singular occasion. It was crowded exceedingly; nor do I recollect ever to have seen such a large audience, except, perhaps, around a *tent* on some sacramental occasion in Scotland. Mr. Frey chose for his text Isaiah liii. 10, last clause, from which he delivered a most excellent sermon. He began by observing that it was the fixed resolution and the constant practice of Paul—a converted Jew—not to know anything among his hearers but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. That the prophet in this chapter did speak of Christ and his sufferings, was, he said, what every Christian believed, and what no Jew could disprove. He proceeded to illustrate his text by showing, first, that the salvation of souls was the pleasure of God; and secondly, that this pleasure should certainly prosper in the hand of Jesus, who was crucified. Having given a judicious illustration of his method, he, in the conclusion of the discourse, made a very affecting representation of the state of his brethren the Jews. Their ignorance was deplorable. For this he assigned various reasons: 1st, They cannot read the Scriptures. Most of them are ignorant of the Hebrew language, and they have them not in any other tongue. Nor have they the whole of them even in the Hebrew. A volume is bound up for the use of families; but the prophecies of Isaiah, Daniel, etc., and some of the Psalms, make no part of it. Their Rabbis will not allow them to read these oracles—as testifying plainly that Jesus of

Nazareth is the Messiah promised to their fathers. *2d*, They have nothing like preaching among them. The Rabbis do *twice* a year deliver a discourse of about three-quarters of an hour in length; and it consists only of absurd accounts of Rabbinical traditions. *3d*, They are taught to believe that *women* have no souls; and thus the females among them are considered unworthy of attention, and receive no instruction. Mr. Frey next illustrated the importance of disseminating Christian truth among the Jews; and he pointed out several advantages which would arise from employing Jewish missionaries in preference to others. He concluded by exhorting all to lend their aid towards the conversion of the poor Jews. On the whole, I heard Mr. Frey with much pleasure. He preached above an hour and a half, and towards the close of his sermon I began to be uneasy—but it was only lest he should be done. After worship, I had a short interview with the interesting preacher, and gave him a cordial invitation to Coldstream, if he should again visit Scotland. Some young children came forward to have the honour of taking Mr. Frey by the hand; and he spoke to them in a very familiar and affectionate manner. It was remarked by one of the ministers present, that those children would probably be telling of their introduction to the Jewish preacher, when the most of us were in another world.

‘On Thursday I set off from Sunderland, accompanied by Mr. Graham. We came to Durham about five o’clock; and while our horses were feeding, we took a view of the famous Cathedral. It is, indeed, a fine old building; but many a far humbler and more modern place of worship has excited in my mind deeper emotions and stronger satisfaction. We left Durham about seven, and arrived at Darlington in four hours. Here I heard a Mr. C. preach, or, as he called it, “talk” a while on Saturday night. His audience was the smallest I had ever seen; so that I did not expect to see many when I

occupied the same pulpit. On Sabbath the 23d I preached in his place. There were few hearing me in the morning, fewer in the afternoon, and, though more, not very many in the evening. I preached again on Monday evening. Among the hearers were a few genteel folks from the Established Church, and some from the family of the clergyman himself. This town contains seven or eight thousand inhabitants; yet it is lamentable to think that—as I have been told—not more than two hundred regularly hear the gospel.

‘At Darlington I heard many things which convinced me more than ever of the excellence of the Presbyterian form of church government. The Independent plan seems to permit almost any person who *thinks himself* called to and qualified for the function, to preach the gospel. A working *joiner* supposed that he was called to be a teacher of others, and at once began to exercise his talents in Yorkshire. In a little—not from any modest view of his preaching, but from an ambition to preach with more *eclat*—he applied for admission to one of the Independent Academies. He was required, like others, to give a written account of his conversion and Christian experience. He could not write it himself, and employed another to do it. The forgery was detected—as the style of that document was wholly unlike that of his “preachments”—before the Academy. This, with some other things, led to his rejection. He was advised to go home and follow his business. He did so, but he continued his preaching too. The pulpit at D. was vacant; he preached in it for some time, and would have been ordained—I was told—their regular pastor, but that he was believed to be rather deeply involved in trade, and was unwilling to relinquish the latter. Other candidates were sought; Mr. G. offered himself among the rest, was unanimously elected, and then ordained. When Mr. G., however, went to Stockton or elsewhere, the joiner, the self-constituted preacher, regularly held forth. He was occa-

sionally employed by other ministers to preach ; but his aim was to be regarded as a co-pastor with Mr. G., and to govern as well as teach. Their views of discipline being different, the little *bark*, which both wished to steer, was in danger of being wrecked. The joiner at length separated, and set up an establishment of his own, so that he might preach when, where, and—it is said—what he pleased. He has since joined the Methodists, and rails at the Independents. Then he began to do everything in his power to calumniate Mr. G., to destroy his usefulness, and ruin his family. . . .

‘ Having left Darlington on Tuesday the 25th, I came to Stockton, where I preached in the evening to about fifty people. Whether, if the Synod were to send a constant supply of popular young men, there might not be a tolerable congregation raised, it is hardly possible to determine. A trial might be made, as those who know the place say the gospel is not preached elsewhere in this town—though in it and the vicinity there may be seven or eight thousand souls. One great difficulty in the way is, the expense of sending preachers from Scotland—an expense which, as matters stand at present, there is no hope of defraying. The people, too, would be the less willing to exert themselves, from having it in their choice to get a supply from the Independents on the most moderate terms. They have it, indeed, completely gratis. Some of them told me that they had been at a great loss ever since an “apprentice” to a tradesman had left them ; he preached to them regularly during his apprenticeship. He had “a gift,” and “preached well ;” but, to their great grief, he had some time ago gone to an Academy to learn the art which he had practised for years.

‘ On Wednesday, the 26th, I rode to Tunstal, and thence, the following day, to Ayton, where I preached in the evening to about eighty people. There is in this place a small chapel, which has always been supplied by ministers from the Church

of Scotland. Mr. L., the present incumbent, is an old man, and preaches himself only when he can get no substitute. His regular hearers are only about twelve in number. The seats in the chapel are never let, but they subscribe £5 annually to their minister; and this, along with £25 allowed by some benevolent Society, forms his whole income. Mr. L. is a Socinian; and as he and his brethren follow something like Presbyterian polity, in many places in England a Presbyterian and a Socinian are supposed to be identical. It were vain for the Synod to think of sending a supply to Ayton as long as Mr. L. lives, and from various circumstances I am led to believe that we can get no introduction to his pulpit after his death.

‘From Ayton I came to Loftus on Friday. The next day I was much entertained with a sight of the alum works belonging to the Right Hon. Lord Dundas. On Sabbath I preached at nine o’clock in the morning to perhaps a hundred and fifty people. In the afternoon I preached at Staithes, a small fishing-town four miles distant from Loftus. I had a good audience. Some of the people told me that they meant very soon to commence the building of a chapel; but I have heard since that it is to be for the use of the Independents. In the evening I returned to Loftus, and preached to a considerably larger number than in the morning. This place, certainly, seems the most likely of any I have yet visited for raising a congregation in connection with the Synod. The Independents cannot allege that they have pre-occupied the ground; and there would be a probability of getting many people to hear, were there only a possibility of keeping one regularly to preach. But there will be many great difficulties to surmount. There is no chapel, and at present no prospect of obtaining the means for building one. There are no serious persons of a respectable position to take an active part in the business; and even of those who—from whatever motives—are willing to

hear the gospel, there are almost none who are willing to pay for it. In the meantime the need of evangelical preaching here is great. . . . On the Sabbath when I preached here, a shoemaker from Whitby held forth in the Methodist chapel. I was prepared for this ; but I was rather surprised when I heard that a man was wont to pray and exhort from the pulpit, who had never learned to read, and was not master of the alphabet.

‘ On Monday, the 1st October, I went to Whitby, where I preached in the evening to a decently large congregation—not without experiencing the distressing emotions which I must always feel in this place, where the memory of my late dear brother cannot but be very forcibly recalled.

‘ From Whitby I went to Thorpe on Tuesday, and preached to a very small audience in the evening. When I was entering the place of worship, a message from a T—— J——, a tailor, was delivered to me, requesting me to intimate that *he* would preach there on the Sabbath following. . . . On Wednesday, the 3d, I preached at Lythe to a few people in a private house. Here there can be no prospect of raising a congregation. From Lythe I went to Redcar on Thursday, and preached in the evening to about forty people. This is a place where there is ample scope for the exertions of a faithful minister. The town contains perhaps fifteen or sixteen hundred inhabitants ; and being a watering-place of considerable repute, its population during the summer, though fluctuating, must be large. The parish church is distant two miles, at a small village called Upleatham ; but, indeed, anywhere it would be of little consequence to the people of Redcar, as but very few of them attend it, and these few, it seems, are treated to a few remarks against *crime*, and not to an evangelical discourse. The Methodists have here pitched their tent, but they have not prospered, and the leaders of the denomination have not allowed any of their regular preachers to settle here, or even to favour it with frequent visits. The congregation must

therefore, for the most part, depend on the services of its own "gifted" members. Indeed, the only person to whom the Methodists of the locality can confidently look for regular preaching, is a *lady*—a Miss W——, who is the leader in their class meetings, and virtually the pastor of the whole flock. This lady appears to be of very agreeable manners, and not to be wanting in good sense and modesty—whatever may be thought of her conduct in leading the worship of the congregation. The Methodists in Redcar, however, do not entertain the same horror and hatred respecting *Calvinistic* preachers which their brethren in other parts of the country cherish. Mr. Young, of Whitby, has been allowed frequently to preach in their chapel; and when he asked them to grant the privilege to me, they readily complied. On the Sabbath prior to the day on which I was to have preached, it was agreed that Miss W—— should make the intimation. But a travelling chapman, happening to come in the way, took her place, and I was forgotten. The chapman preached repeatedly during the week, and being detained by business till Thursday, and having nothing else to do in the evening, he meant to have preached again, had I not made my appearance. Notice had been given only a short time before worship began, and this was one reason why the audience was so very small. When Mr. Young and I entered the pulpit, we found the pedlar already in possession of it. He, however, kept silent, and permitted us to proceed. Probably, in mounting the pulpit, he expected that we should ask him to take some part of the service. He attended, indeed, to that part for which he was qualified, and thus we were all employed. Mr. Young read the hymns, I prayed and preached, and the pedlar snuffed the candles! After sermon, I learned that he had preached for upwards of twenty years. We had little time for enjoying the conversation of our colleague. While we were together, he held forth with great fluency in the purest Yorkshire brogue. On Friday, the 5th,

I preached at Guisborough to a small congregation of Independents, who are under the pastoral care of Mr. Hinmers, who is a native of Scotland, and was educated at the Academy instituted by Mr. Haldane. He was one of thirty who were intended to go as missionaries to India. The expense of this mission was to have been defrayed by Mr. Haldane. But Government refusing liberty for such a number of religious teachers to go to India, the project was abandoned, and Mr. Hinmers and his brethren were dispersed over the home field. After trying several places, both in Scotland and England, he settled in Guisborough. As the congregation here cannot be supposed to support him, he preaches to another at Stoxley on one part of the Sabbath. Ayton gets considerable aid from him. He preaches for Mr. L—— very frequently on the Sabbath forenoon. Besides preaching to those congregations, he visits several villages, and supplies them with a weekly sermon. His zeal and labours, as well as those of many of his brethren in England, are highly commendable. I wish they would provoke the jealousy, so as to excite the imitation, of their Scottish brethren. I am delighted to find that Mr. Young treads in their steps. His zeal is, indeed, ardent, and his exertions for the spread of the gospel in the “dark” places around Whitby have been great and sustained. May the Lord of the vineyard make me to profit by the example set by him and other labourers in this country ! If my visit here have this good effect, my mission cannot have been in vain. I am fully convinced that it is my duty to preach more frequently than I have done in time past, even though my discourses should be composed with less pains. I hope God will enable me after this to preach three times regularly on Sabbath, and as often as possible on week-days, in the different villages within the bounds of my congregation. This may entail on me much mental and much bodily fatigue ; but the Master whom I serve sends no man a warfare on his own charges. I have

spent much—very much—of my time in doing nothing, or worse than nothing ; and it is now more than time that I should begin to spend and be spent with a view to the salvation of perishing sinners. Insufficient of myself, may I have reason henceforward to say that my sufficiency is of God !

‘ Having left Guisborough on Saturday, I came to Ayton, where I preached on the forenoon of Sabbath. The chapel was decently filled with very attentive hearers. On the afternoon I went to Stoxley, distant three miles, and preached in the most commodious and the best-filled chapel which I have seen in this part of the country. In the evening I rode ten miles farther and preached at Stockton. My horse, when going carelessly, though not slowly, stumbled and fell ; but, through the mercy of Him who “ preserveth man and beast,” I escaped without sustaining any injury, though I was thrown headlong with great force.’ . . . [At Stockton the congregation was at the time divided between the claims of Independency and Presbyterianism ; and Mr. Thomson observed little that could gratify him, and recorded about the case nothing that could interest the reader.] ‘ From Stockton I rode to Redcar on Monday, the 8th October, intending to preach in the evening ; but, by some mistake, it had been reported that I was to have preached in the Methodist chapel on the previous evening. A great congregation had assembled, and waited a considerable time for my arrival. To detain the people, several hymns were sung ; but when it was evident that the expected preacher would not make his appearance, Miss W—— (not being prepared for anything else) prayed. In this exercise she was succeeded by a shoemaker ; and then such of the assembly as had remained, were dismissed. After my arrival on Monday, I found that no intimation had been made of my design to preach in the evening. As this was the second time that the same omission had been made here, I began to suspect that it might be owing to something else than a mistake, and I proposed immediately

to leave the place. I reluctantly agreed, however, to stay and preach to the few who could get notice, and might be willing to attend. I was afterwards pleased that I came to this determination, as I had a much larger audience than I ever expected to see in such a place. The people seemed much impressed during the sermon, and I hope it was not heard in vain. The local orators among the Methodists had, with the single exception of Miss W——, begun to take alarm, and could no longer refrain from expressing their fears. A shoemaker, who had been preaching on the Sabbath morning before I was expected, when he learned who was to occupy the pulpit after himself, thought it incumbent on him to express his sentiments very freely and somewhat warmly on the subject. In giving vent to the indignation of his mind, at the inconsistency, as he thought, of his brethren and sisters in showing such favour to a preacher who was not a Methodist, he employed the following simile: “Your pulpit I can compare to nothing else than Noah’s ark, for it admits clean and unclean.” On Tuesday, the 9th, I preached at Loftus to a better audience than could have been looked for on a week-day. From Loftus I proceeded to Staithes next day, and preached in the evening. Here, too, the attendance was good. The people, I was told, heard me with the greater pleasure from supposing that I belonged to the Independents, who had cherished them for some time, and with whom some of them expected that they would soon be joined in church-fellowship. It will be well if any party, holding ‘the Head, even Christ,’ can succeed in forming a permanent society for religious worship in this destitute town. Having returned to Whitby, I preached on the evening of Thursday, the 11th, prior to the dispensation of the Lord’s Supper. As Mr. Young was determined that I should have no respite from my labours when near him, I complied with his request in delivering a sermon to the people of Ruswarp—a small village distant about a mile and a half from Whitby. At this village

I had spent, with peculiar delight, the summer of 1803. But the remembrance of the joy which I felt when under the roof, and, for a great part of the time, in the company of my late dear brother, now fills me with pain.

‘On Saturday I preached again at Whitby; and on Sabbath, the 14th, I assisted at the dispensation of the sacrament, and gave the evening sermon. The number of members was nearly the same as when I formerly, in 1807, assisted Mr. Young. The attendance, at least in the evening, is very far from being so good as in the time of my brother’s ministry; but I do not know that the congregation, properly so called, is much decreased. From Whitby I went to Helmsley on Monday, the 15th. This is a considerable town, about twenty-three miles from York, and thirty from Whitby. Here attempts have before been made to raise a congregation in connection with the Synod. My brother had preached in it several times with great acceptance; and hopes were entertained that an application was soon to be made to the Presbytery of Coldstream for a regular supply of sermon. But, for reasons which I either did not hear, or have forgotten, the idea was abandoned or delayed. More recently another attempt, still more discouraging, was made by Mr. Young. The only result of his preaching was to excite much clamorous abuse against himself, and some suspicions of the orthodoxy of the denomination to which he belonged! His own principles they, without hesitation, and doubtless most unjustly, condemned as tending to Arminianism. Among the charges which they brought against this good man, one was, that he was possessed of such vanity as to wear *tassels* on his boots!’ [What a contrast to the rapturous and grateful outburst, ‘How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who bringeth good tidings,’ etc., was this ludicrously mean criticism upon the preacher’s *tasseled boots*!] ‘From such people what had we to expect, even in the event of an application? Yet, as they had a good chapel and no minister, Mr.

Young thought it right that every effort should be made to gain them. He fixed on Helmsley as one of the places in which the Synod's missionary should labour. One of the members of his own congregation, an old Scotchman, resides there ; and to him Mr. Young despatched a letter, announcing that I was to preach in Helmsley, and requesting him to aid in circulating the intimation. The honest man returned for answer, that he did not wish to have my feelings hurt by being exposed to the obloquy of so strange and foolish a people as those among whom he lived, and on this account he strongly advised that I should not go. On receiving this reply, Mr. Young determined that I should not go, though he was at a loss how otherwise to find employment for me in the third week of October. Helmsley, Kirby-Moorside, and Thorpe were three places about which he had formed very high hopes ; but now, it appeared that at none of them was there the slightest wish to get sermon from me or any minister in our connection. Indeed, the two last mentioned places had been previously secured by the Independents ; and I do acknowledge that, had I shown any great anxiety to preach at these places, they would have had cause to complain of an officious and party-spirited interference. Matters were, however, different at Helmsley. If the people themselves were willing to receive me, no party whatever could complain. We thought that the Scotsman might have been mistaken, and Mr. Young regretted that he had applied to him. Still we could not think that I had any call to ride thirty miles, before we had some grounds for believing that there would be some to hear me if I should offer to preach. Meanwhile, a letter came from Leeds earnestly urging me to pay a visit to my old friends there. A similar application had come from Knottingly ; and after weighing all circumstances, and considering that I had no engagement for that week, I resolved to go to Leeds and Knottingly. Helmsley lies not far from the road to Leeds ; and Mr. Young thought it could not be improper to

inform the people of Helmsley that I was to pass that way, and would, if it were agreeable to them, give a sermon on Monday evening. The chapel is pretty large ; but I had not the pleasure of seeing it decently filled. The few who were present seemed very attentive ; and some expressed a desire that I should either remain with them for a few days, or return for the Sabbath. From conversation, I learned that many in Helmsley might easily have been induced to apply for preachers from our Synod, if the sending of them had cost nothing to the hearers. From Helmsley I rode to York, where I left my horse, and took the coach to Leeds.'

He was greatly disappointed with his visit to Leeds. He had a warm interest in the peace and prosperity of that congregation, which had been his brother's last charge, and which, shortly after that brother's death, had unanimously called himself to be their pastor. Though he declined to leave the Coldstream sphere, within which he had but recently been settled, he was deeply concerned in the well-being of the bereaved flock at Leeds, and ever ready to give practical proofs of his sympathy. In the course of his present mission of six weeks, he visited the two places where his brother had laboured, and had free intercourse with the Whitby and the Leeds congregations. He found the former united and vigorous, and then his sadness about his brother was soothed by the thought that *he* would have rejoiced to see the work of his Master carried on successfully by another's ministry ; but unhappy divisions and factions were prevailing in the Leeds congregation, and had, he saw, 'brought it to the verge of ruin.' What his brother had with careful toil built up, was being torn down, and the extinction of the Secession cause in Leeds seemed near and inevitable. In addition to the other and more general causes of regret at this prospect, he lamented over it as the breaking up and the blotting out of his brother's chief memorial on earth ! The marble tablet, with its inscrip-

tion, on the chapel wall might remain; but the far more enviable impression on the heart of the congregation in honour of the deceased pastor would disappear, if that congregation were entirely and finally dispersed. Adam Thomson had often, when confronting the Leeds congregation, seen how affectionately they remembered his brother. He had often seen and read the monument which they had raised to him in their heart; but if the congregation were dissolved, that monument would be destroyed, though individuals who had been members might continue to cherish the memory of their departed minister.¹ Thus the divided state of the congregation deprived his visit to Leeds of everything like satisfaction; and it is not improbable that it was his strong aversion to write down any account of the sayings and doings of the contending parties in Leeds, that induced him abruptly to terminate the journal of his six weeks' mission to the north of England.

We may here give extracts from his private note-book about a short tour in Ireland, where he went, along with the Rev. Mr. Brotherston, parish minister of Dysart, to attend the Synod of Ulster and the Secession Synod, and to preach and make collections on behalf of the Scottish Missionary Society. On June 22d, 1824, he left home, taking the well-known road to

¹ The Rev. Dr. Young of Whitby, writing, in 1846, to Dr. Thomson about the death of Mrs. Young, says: 'It was in 1802, under the ministry of your worthy brother, that she first felt the power and tasted the sweetness of the gospel. It was then that, in the bloom of youth and beauty, surrounded by all the attractions of the world, she renounced the vain enjoyments of time and sense, and sought her chief happiness in the service of Christ; and for forty-four years she has been adorning in all things the doctrine of God her Saviour. I have been comforted with expressions of sympathy from all ranks and classes around me. One of the most tenderly affecting letters was from the Rev. Mr. Arundel, *whose late wife*, you know, *was also a seal of your brother's ministry*. When you write, be so kind as name the date of your brother's marriage; that is named in her writings as the time when she was first led to attend on his ministry. . . . The chapel was more crowded on the Sabbath after her death than it has ever been since I preached to improve your brother's death.'

Edinburgh, and then the less familiar one to Glasgow ; but after stepping on board of the Glasgow steamboat for Belfast, everything was strange to him. He had marvelled at the small sum charged as passage-money—‘only ten shillings for about 160 miles ;’ but he was soon more astonished at the swiftness with which he and nearly a hundred and fifty fellow-passengers were rushing across the waters.

‘*Thursday, 24th.*—We entered the bay of Belfast early this morning ; but it was near five o’clock before I came into the town. Having got little sleep for several nights, I went to bed as soon as I reached the inn. Rose about ten o’clock, and after writing a letter home to tell of my arrival, I strolled forth to view the place. It is indeed a fine and flourishing town. In passing along one of the streets, I saw the gates of a church open ; and on approaching, perceived that a number of devotees were kneeling around the doors of the edifice. On stepping forward to see what was going on within, a woman, who was prostrate at the door, bade me either withdraw or take off my hat. I chose the former alternative ; but as I was taking my leave, a bell rung, and all who were on their knees rose and rushed into the church. I turned and ventured in among the rest. It was St. John’s day, and there might be two or three thousands present. The priest, who was dressed rather like a mountebank than a minister of Christ, was standing with his face to the pulpit and his back to the people. He seemed to be rubbing something between his hands. I did not hear him mutter a word ; but a little boy near him, in clerical dress, rung a bell, and again all the people fell on their knees. I was left standing alone, and being determined neither to give offence nor to seem to do honour “to the beast or his image,” I thought it proper to withdraw. What feelings of pity, on the one hand, and of gratitude on the other, did this scene excite in my mind !

‘In the afternoon there was a meeting to make arrangements

about the mission. I was introduced to the Rev. Mr. Edgar, with whom I spent the evening. Friday and Saturday were occupied in visiting different places in the town, with the two ministers of the Secession, etc.

'Sabbath, 27th.—Mr. Brotherston having arrived only yesterday, he and I preached each three times to-day. There was as much interest excited, and as good collections were made, in the different congregations as could reasonably have been expected.

'Monday, 28th.—Dr. Hanna called early to inform me that I was expected to preach at Randalstone at two o'clock, to accommodate the Countess of Mazarine and her family, who could not attend at a later hour. That we might get forward in time, we set off about ten o'clock. There were five of us, Dr. Hanna, one of his elders, Mr. Brotherston, myself, and the driver, in a jaunting-car drawn by a single horse! We had not gone more than a mile, when the horse refused to go farther, and we were obliged to return to Belfast; and before we succeeded in engaging another horse and car, much time was lost. It was just the hour for preaching when we reached Antrim, and we were still three long Irish miles from Randalstone. In order, if possible, to arrive before the audience should be dispersed, we hired a chaise, and directed the driver to push on. But all would not do. As we came in view of the inn, we found the Countess of Mazarine, and as many ladies and gentlemen as her carriage could hold, on their way home from the chapel. I explained the reason of our late arrival. Her ladyship expressed much regret at being unable now to wait for sermon, and requested me to accept of £1 as her collection. The chapel was at a considerable distance from the inn; and we were sorry, on reaching it, to find that all who had come to hear had now gone away. Mr. Brotherston preached in the evening in another chapel belonging to the Synod of Ulster; but very few attended, and the collection

was only £1. After sermon, we went on to Moneymore, where the Synod of Ulster was to meet next day.

‘*Tuesday, 29th.*—Attended the meeting of Synod, which was opened by rather a curious sermon from 1 Cor. xi. 18. Mr. Hogg, the preacher, was, upon the whole, sound in his views. He professed himself an admirer of Calvin, yet he introduced his eulogium of that great man by saying, that “John Calvin did not know the doctrine of the immutability of truth founded on the principles of common sense.” I have not found any of his hearers able to say what he meant by this very remarkable oracle.

‘As there was nothing but routine business to be transacted by the Synod in the forenoon, Mr. Brotherston and I resolved to go to Cookstown to see Mr. Millar. We found him not at home, and we returned and dined with the members of Synod. After dinner, the moderator, Mr. Cook of Killileagh, who is a very able, pious, and amiable man, proposed the health of the “deputation from Scotland” in an admirable speech. Mr. B. briefly returned thanks.

‘*Wednesday, 30th.*—I again went to Cookstown to see Mr. Millar, as it was necessary to have some conversation with him respecting the mission. After breakfast, we came together to Moneymore, and attended the Synod in the forenoon. Mr. Millar and I had lodged together one session at the Divinity Hall at Selkirk; but we had not met till this day for more than twenty-one years. I should not have known him again; but he assured me that he would have recognised me wherever we had met. He is decidedly one of the most zealous and respectable ministers in the north of Ireland. In the evening, Mr. Brotherston and I, accompanied by Mr. Porter, assistant secretary to the Dublin Society, set out for Magherafelt and Castledawson. Mr. B. preached at the former town, and I at the latter. Mr. B.’s audience was small—the night being wet, and the collection only twelve shillings. My audience was

equally small ; and Mr. Brown, a member of the Ulster Synod, from whom I had a most cordial reception, judged it better to delay the collection to Sabbath week. We returned to Money-more in the evening.

Thursday, July 1st.—After attending on the Synod part of the forenoon, I finally took my leave of it to proceed to Coagh, where I was kindly received by Mr. Cowan, a minister of the Synod of Ulster. I felt no regret at being obliged so soon to leave the meetings of that Synod. I found among its members sound and able, pious and zealous ministers ; but it is notorious that they have many brethren of an opposite description, and the chaff is mixed with the wheat. In their proceedings I observed much carnal policy ; and I was told that many of them were indeed worldly men, who attend more to farming, jobbing, and other secular pursuits, than to the great work of the Christian ministry. Comparatively few are said to keep up even the appearance of family religion. Some never worship God in their houses at all ; and a great number think it sufficient to attend to this duty on the Sabbath evening. Arianism and other heresies prevail among them. Still, both in regard to doctrine and practice, there has been observed an improvement of late. I observed nothing very peculiar as to the way in which business is conducted by this Synod. The moderator is chosen from a list, consisting of a nomination of one by each presbytery. Each presbytery nominates those of its members who are to form the Committee of Bills, Overtures, etc. The presbyteries give each a long and particular report ; and on such reports a great part of the Synod's business is founded. There was, however, no interesting business at the present meeting ; nor was there anything like eloquence displayed in their debates. The only matter that gave rise to any lengthened discussion while I attended was, whether absentees should be subjected to a fine proportioned to the amount of bounty allowed by Government, or whether all should pay

alike. It was carried that every absent member should pay a fine of *two pounds*, whatever the class might be to which he belonged. The bounty classes, as they are called, are three : the first class receives £50 ; the second, £75 ; and the third, £100 per annum. There are likewise three classes among the Seceders who receive bounty from Government : £40, £50, and £70. The bounty is far from being an advantage to either Synod. The people, imagining that their pastors receive from Government what is by Government deemed a sufficient remuneration for their services, make no exertions themselves. Few ministers have more than £50 promised by their people ; many much less ; and some do not even receive £10. They are thus driven to adopt those plans for their support by which so many of them have been thoroughly secularized. Some of the Secession ministers gain nothing by a comparison with their brethren of the Synod of Ulster in this respect. It is quite common for them to attend their workers in the fields, to go to fairs and markets, to buy and sell corn and cattle, etc. There is even one instance of a Seceding minister acting as a land-agent or factor, and also as a proctor to receive tithes for the clergyman who holds the living in a parish which he seldom sees ; but then the visits of his Seceding *colleague* are regular, and he is strict in enforcing the payment of tithes ! Churchmen would tolerate Seceders, if the latter consented to act as their tithe-proctors !

‘At Coagh I had but a small audience, as many of the people had gone to Moneymore to attend the Synod. The collection was only £1. There was an Episcopalian minister present, who is widely esteemed for his piety and zeal. Mr. Cowan, like Mr. Brown, expressed publicly, and with Irish exaggeration, his good opinion of the sermon, and his regret that it had so few hearers. I returned to Cookstown about eleven o’clock.

‘*Friday, 2d.*—Mr. Millar accompanied me in the evening to Sandholes. We passed through the lands of Killymoon, one

of the most romantic and beautiful places I have yet seen in this beautiful country. The attendance at Sandholes small, and the collection only £1, 5s. 3d. But Mr. Harkness promised that an addition should be made to it on Sabbath week. This minister's house is situated at the distance of a mile from his chapel; and is an humble dwelling indeed—a thatched cottage of one storey—meant as the farm-house of the land he occupies. After tea, Mr. Millar and I returned to Cookstown.

'Saturday, 3d July.—My colleague having preached at Moneymore on Thursday night, and remained there till to-day, making arrangements for our subsequent operations, passed this way on his road to Lurgan, Tullylish, and Banbridge, where he preaches to-morrow.

'Sabbath, 4th.—Attended a large Sabbath school in the morning, and addressed the scholars. Preached in Mr. D——'s (a member of Synod of Ulster) to a large congregation. But the collection was far from liberal—£5, 5s. 4½d. The congregation is rich; but neither minister nor members take much interest in benevolent societies of any kind. I preached in the afternoon to a good audience in Mr. Millar's meeting-house. Though his people are both less numerous and less wealthy than Mr. D——'s, they always make better collections. This is just what any one would anticipate, who is aware of the piety, talents, and zealous activity of my old friend. The collection on the present occasion was £7. In the evening, I took a gig and went to Stewardstown, where I found a large audience. I never, perhaps, preached to more attentive hearers. I could not, however, but be struck at seeing here a shameful practice—still more prevalent at Cookstown—of people going out and in during the time of sermon. The collection was £5, 2s. 11d. As no proper lodging was provided here, I came on to Dungannon, where I was engaged to preach next day at twelve o'clock.

'Monday.—Preached in the meeting-house of Mr. Bennet.

There were several ministers present ; but, as might have been expected from the early hour, the audience was small, and the collection only £1, 13s. 4d.

‘ In Dungannon, which is a pretty large and rather a handsome town, there has lately been built a new meeting-house by the Seceders ; but they have not yet called a minister. The Rev. Mr. Harkness met me here, and we went on to Moy, where I was very kindly received by Mr. Brown, an Independent minister from Scotland. I preached to his very small congregation in the evening, and got a collection of £2, 6s. 9½d. Independency does not flourish in Ireland. From Moy, Mr. Harkness and I went on to Port-o’-Down. We did not arrive till past twelve o’clock, and got rather a cold reception from the landlord of the inn, whom we could hardly persuade to give us any supper. We left early in the morning ; and having changed our jaunting-car at Lurgan (which is a considerable town), we came to Lisburn to breakfast. Lisburn is a beautiful town, surrounded by a most picturesque and highly cultivated country. We left immediately after breakfast ; and a little after twelve o’clock reached Belfast, where the Secession Synod meets to-day. Before we could get to the Synod, the sermon was near a close ; and from the little I heard, I felt no deep regret at not having heard more. After the court was constituted, and the roll called, I was requested by the moderator to sit as a corresponding member. This brought me to my feet, and I spoke nearly as follows :

“ Moderator, I feel honoured by the request you have now made, and in complying with it, I am happy to have the opportunity of corresponding judicially with a body of men with whom I—in common with my brethren in Scotland—consider it a high honour to be connected. Sprung from the same root, holding the same faith, maintaining the same ecclesiastical order and discipline, the Secession Churches of Ireland and Scotland, though forming two separate bodies from mere locality,

will ever, I hope, be found in one spirit, and with one mind, to strive together for the faith of the gospel. In complying with your request at present, sir, the advantage is all my own ; you can derive no benefit from my counsel, but I shall be ready to profit by yours."

' On the evening of Thursday I went with Mr. Edgar to Castlereagh, where I preached to a tolerable audience, but got no collection, A gentleman of the place, however, afterwards sent me seven *ten-pennies*—5s. 10d. Irish.

' *Wednesday, 7th.*—Attended the Synod till four o'clock. After dinner, proceeded with Mr. Porter to Saintfield, where I had a very poor audience, and the corresponding collection of 18s. 6d. It was intimated that Mr. Brotherston was to preach in the Synod of Ulster meeting-house, and I in Mr. Walker's. Mr. B. could not go, having to preach in Belfast, and the people were desired, all of them, to attend in Mr. Walker's, yet the attendance was miserable.

' *Thursday, 8th.*—Attended the Synod in the forenoon, and was requested to address the court on the subject of my mission. The call was unexpected, but I spoke at greater length, to better purpose, and with more effect than I could have anticipated. The speeches of the ministers, and the resolutions of the Synod on missions, were entirely to my mind. In the evening, I, accompanied by Mr. M'Culloch and Mr. M'Ilvaine, went to Granshaw, where I had the best audience I have yet seen in Ireland on a week-day, and I hope my visit was useful in different ways. A lively interest was excited in favour of the Scottish Missionary Society. I was led to expect that the praying societies connected with the congregation would henceforward contribute to our funds. In the meantime, though Mr. M'Culloch did not expect me to do more at present than merely excite an interest, there was a collection got, as a free-will offering, of £2. Received a donation from the Rev. Dr. Edgar of £1, 1s., and from the

Rev. A. M'Ilvaine of £1; being third part of the proceeds of Ballyblack monthly missionary prayer-meeting.

'*Friday, 9th.*—Attended the Synod till four o'clock, and then went to preach at Dundonald in the meeting-house of Mr. Finlay, a member of the Synod of Ulster. I was accompanied by Messrs. Brotherston and Porter. Mr. B. began by prayer. There were very few hearers, partly because it was Belfast market-day, and the collection was only 14s. 2d.

'*Saturday, 10th.*—Wrote home, and then went to the Synod once more. There was nothing now but routine business; but I was gratified in hearing read a long and interesting reply to an address of the Synod, from the Lord-Lieutenant. The reply was in his own handwriting. The business of this Synod was on the whole well conducted, and many of the speeches were much longer and far more eloquent than I had heard in the Synod of Ulster. The reports made by each presbytery, especially respecting the students, are well worthy of imitation. I should also like to see their plan in regard to presbyterial visitation introduced among us.

'About twelve o'clock, we left Belfast by the Londonderry mail. Mr. Brotherston went on to Coleraine, and Mr. Porter and I were set down at a bridge, where we took our journey on foot to Connor, which is about two miles from the public road. We dined with Mr. Henry, and were most hospitably entertained by him and his wife.

'*Sabbath, 11th.*—The morning was exceedingly unseasonable and inclement, and Mr. Henry thought at first that it would be advisable to have no collection. Rather more people came, however, than might have been expected, and a collection was made amounting to £3, 15s. 6d. This was nothing from so large a congregation as Connor, yet not amiss for the number of people actually present. Went to Broughshane and preached in the afternoon, when again the weather operated greatly against the collection, which was only £2,

16s. 6d. Broughshane, like Connor, is a large country congregation—about *nine hundred families* belonging to it. I found that all the ministers in Ireland reckon their congregations, not by the members, but by the *families* that compose them. More was done for aiding the funds of our Society at this place than at any other we had visited. The executors of a gentleman lately deceased were present, and told me before going to the pulpit, that they had the power of giving part of the good man's bequests to such Missionary Societies as they most approved of, and added, that they thought of giving £300 to the Scottish Missionary Society. The idea, I was told, would not have occurred to them, had not the deputation been in the country at the time. As they, however, spoke rather hesitatingly as to whether they would really give the money to our Society, I craved liberty to mention the proposal in the conclusion of my sermon, as a circumstance gratifying to myself, and honourable to the congregation to which the deceased had belonged, and of which his executors were still members. This I did not forget to do, and thus the intention of the executors was confirmed, and the matter no longer left in doubt. It was subsequently agreed that the money should be paid at Belfast on Tuesday, the 26th inst. I did not see Mr. Stuart, the minister of the congregation. He belongs to the Synod of Ulster, and is described as a most excellent man. He was at this time on a visit to Dublin. Preached in the evening at Ballymena, to a tolerable audience in the meeting-house of Mr. Wauchope—another member of the Synod of Ulster. The collection was £5, 17s. 7d. Mr. Campbell, the Secession minister of this place, showed us much kindness. After sermon, Mr. Porter and I went on to Mr. Brotherston at Ballymoney, where there is a very large meeting-house in connection with the Synod of Ulster. The minister treated us most hospitably; and after spending with him the forenoon of Monday, I set out for Ahadona, where I was to preach in the

evening. The chapel is far from any dwelling-house. Like many old places of worship in Ireland, it is in a ruinous state, and dark, dirty, and uncomfortable in every respect. In most country places here there is almost no attention paid to cleanliness or comfort in the chapels; and in this the Irish are much further behind the Scotch, than the Scotch are generally supposed to be behind the English. The pulpits are sometimes full of dust; and neither in them nor in the pews does any regard seem to be paid to comfort. As there was a great fair held at Ballymoney, only six miles from Ahadona, a good attendance could not be looked for. It was, however, in the circumstances not amiss, and the collection amounted to £3, 16s. 5½d. I noticed that all the three psalms which I gave out here were sung to the same tune. I found that it was not peculiar to this congregation to keep by one tune. Indeed, the singing in most Presbyterian places of worship in Ireland is very bad. The line is read in a way which is neither reading nor chanting; and some old-fashioned Scotch tunes are sung in a very old-fashioned manner. Mr. Brotherston having met Mr. Porter and me at Ahadona, we set off after sermon for Coleraine, which, as we made a call by the way, we did not reach until a very late hour. Coleraine is a large, but not an elegant town. It is more ancient than Londonderry, and gave the name to the county before the building of that celebrated city. It is intersected by the river Bann, which is full of salmon. Vast numbers are caught at a time in traps, very ingeniously contrived for the purpose. Mr. Brotherston had preached here on Sabbath. We had therefore no clerical duty to perform, and for once we resolved to have a holiday, and to spend it in visiting the far-famed Giants' Causeway. No stranger, possessing the smallest degree of curiosity, thinks of leaving Coleraine without seeing this remarkable place; and, during the summer, Coleraine is crowded with travellers attracted by the Causeway alone. The day

was rather unfavourable ; still, so great was the number of visitors, that we could not find vehicles, and some of our intended party were compelled to remain at home. When we came to the hill immediately above the Causeway, we were met by a crowd of Irish peasants, whose dress and appearance bespoke their wretchedness. All of them were clamorous, some insisting on being our guides to the place of wonder, others importuning us to buy the specimens of spar, diamonds, and stones of various kinds which they had collected, or said they had collected, at the Causeway. Their meanness and impudence, their greed and importunity, exceeded anything I had looked for even in Ireland. We could not proceed without buying some of the specimens, and also without taking some of the rabble as guides, though we were favoured with the company of Messrs. M'Aldon and Whiteside—two of the ministers of Coleraine,—who were quite competent to direct our attention to whatever was noteworthy. On arriving at the Causeway, I at first felt no little disappointment ; but after going over it, and examining its different parts, I became convinced that it was, what I had heard it described as being, one of the greatest natural curiosities in the island. “It is an immense natural mole, or quay, projecting some hundred feet into the sea, from the base of a steep promontory on the coast of Antrim ; and is composed of a vast range of basaltic pillars in close contact with each other, exhibiting a sort of polygon pavement resembling the appearance of a solid honeycomb.” The scenery around the shore is grand. As it is best seen from the sea, we took a boat and sailed for some time round it. At the bottom of some of the promontories are subterranean caves, into which the sea flows for a considerable distance. We ventured into one ; but the darkness and the dashing of the waves were rather unpleasant, and we were glad to retreat. After dining at a small house near the Causeway, we returned to Coleraine in the evening.

‘On Wednesday, the 14th, I had, much against my will, to spend another holiday, through some neglect of intimating sermon at Dervock. On Thursday, my fellow-labourer and I, accompanied by the Dublin secretary, left Coleraine for Dungiven. Mr. B. preached to a very respectable congregation. We then set off for Londonderry, which we did not reach before half-past one in the morning. Our late arrival, though not very pleasant in the first instance, proved ultimately the means of affording inexpressible relief to my mind. I had expected a letter from home to reach me at Coleraine, but having been disappointed every post during my stay, I left for Londonderry in a state of painful suspense. About two o’clock in the morning, a gentleman arrived in the mail from Coleraine, and brought with him a letter from Coldstream, containing good tidings of my family. Full of joy and gratitude, I retired to bed and had a sound sleep, instead of the anxious and restless hours I had anticipated. We rose in the morning to have a view of the famous city. Londonderry is, indeed, a fine old city, beautifully situated on the banks of the Foyle, over which, and close to the city, there is a wooden bridge, 1000 feet in length and 40 feet in breadth. It is still surrounded by walls, as at the time when it sustained the famous siege, from December 1688 to August 1689. The inhabitants still speak with interest and enthusiasm of the cruel sufferings and successful heroism of their ancestors at that era. On Friday, the 16th, I went to St. Johnston’s, and dined with Mr. Cunningham, the venerable minister of the place. I preached to his people, and got a collection of £3, 7s, 1½d. Returned to Londonderry in the evening.

‘*Saturday, 17th.*—Went to Cumber, and preached to a few people; the collection, £1, 3s. 4d. Early on the morning of Sabbath, I was called on by the Rev. Mr. Dill of Ballykelly, for whom I was to preach in the afternoon. He and his wife treated me with the greatest hospitality. After breakfast we

went to the chapel, distant two miles from the manse, and I found the largest and most respectable congregation I had yet preached to in Ireland. I was in excellent spirits, and the audience was the most attentive I perhaps ever had. I had ordered the driver of the car to be ready to set off with me as soon as the service was over. But, on leaving the chapel, I could not find him. I waited for him with growing impatience, as I saw I was to be quite too late for reaching Faughanvale, where I was engaged to preach in the afternoon. He made his appearance at length, but in a state of beastly intoxication. I should have allowed him to be the *gentleman*, and have myself been the driver, but I did not know a foot of the road, and the horse had a peculiar temper. There was no alternative but to commit myself to the guidance of this incapable Jehu. At one place we very narrowly escaped being overturned. He, however, managed to take me in safety to the place, where a large congregation were waiting with some anxiety for my arrival. Here, again, I was heard with great attention; but the collection fell far below my expectations, being only £3, 17s. 1½d. With Mr. Moor, the minister, I was greatly delighted. . . . Returned to Londonderry, and preached in the evening to the congregation of Mr. Crawford, a minister of the Secession. The audience small, but the collection was £5, 7s. 11½d. Preached again in Londonderry on Monday evening, to a small Independent congregation, under the care of the Rev. Mr. Radcliff. The collection was £2, 3s. 5d. My route required me to proceed from Londonderry direct to Dublin. But when preparing for this journey, I received a letter from the Dublin Committee, forbidding me to visit that city, as Dr. Morrison was to be there collecting for the London Missionary Society, and as the number of public meetings appointed for that week would preclude the possibility of my getting any collections. This was vexatious. If any other course had been marked out for me,

my duty would have been plain ; yet I had a strong wish to see Dublin. As I could now get no collections during the week anywhere, the only question was—Whether to go to my next station by Dublin would increase the expense? . . . On Tuesday, the 20th, I left Londonderry, and, after a fatiguing journey, I reached Dublin next morning about seven o'clock. Weary as I was with much travelling and little sleep, I could not resist the temptation of attending a meeting of the Irish Evangelical Society, which was that day to be held in one of the public halls of the city. The object of the meeting was very important, and the details about the exertions being made for evangelizing the south of Ireland were interesting and most encouraging. A report had been widely circulated, and generally believed, that *O'Connell* meant to attend the meeting and oppose the motions that might be made, and also to contradict the statements, thwart the designs, and abuse the persons of the directors. Contemplating the possibility of such an attack, the committee had resolved that none should be allowed to speak but those previously appointed, intending after they had ended their speeches to withdraw, and leave *O'Connell* and his friends to harangue such as might choose to remain. I was requested to take a motion, but feeling greatly jaded, I declined. In the course of the meeting, however, there was a motion expressive of gratitude to the ministers and people of Scotland, to whose exertions and benevolence the Society had been deeply indebted. By the mover and seconder there was so much said respecting Scotland and its ministers and people, that the only Scottish minister present might have been strongly tempted to reply. It was whispered to the secretary that I was ready to speak ; but he whispered again that this could not now be permitted, though he had previously wished it, because the motions were disposed of, and he feared that, if I should speak without a motion, *O'Connell* might follow my example. But this

objection was overruled, and I rose and spoke at some length. Nor did I know till then that anything said by me could have produced such an effect as, to my surprise, was obvious on the present occasion. There were several eloquent speeches by ministers from different parts of the country, particularly by one from Sligo, which is near one of the principal spheres of the Society's operations. Dr. Morrison spoke shortly, but in a very hesitating and unsatisfactory manner. I was, however, much pleased with this meeting. O'Connell and his friends were either absent or silent.

'In the evening of the same day I went to hear the Rev. Dr. Morrison of London preach. The chapel was far from being so crowded as might have been expected from the Doctor's celebrity. Strangely, the sermon was not striking in any respect ; and it was read with a most monotonous voice, and in a listless manner. There must have been a universal disappointment. On Thursday, there was a meeting of the Continental Society, at which the Earl of Roden presided. Prior to the meeting, I was introduced to this nobleman, whom I had been anxious to see, since I read his admirable and affecting speech at the last meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society. His Lordship opened the meeting to-day with a speech which was honourable to him, both as an accomplished nobleman, and as a devoted servant of the Prince of the kings of the earth. The first motion was made by a wealthy young banker, of the name of La Touche, who, as springing from a family that had come from the Continent, expressed his ardent desire for the spread of the gospel there. His speech was excellent ; and he was followed by a number of others, chiefly Episcopalians, who gave good proof at once of great piety and of considerable eloquence. Dublin is highly privileged with evangelical ministers of various denominations. It is rather remarkable that the Secession can hardly be said to be on a respectable footing here. There is only one Seceding

place of worship ; and though the minister is rather a learned, and certainly a very pious and popular man, still his congregation continues very small. Though I was much engaged in attending public meetings, I had some time—and I spent it diligently—for visiting the many and rich curiosities of Dublin. The public buildings—such as the Bank, the Custom House, the Post Office, the Castle, the College, the Bridges, Nelson's Monument, etc.—are all striking, and their sites judiciously chosen to show them to the best advantage. The printing and numbering of bank-notes by steam, I had the opportunity, through some kind friends, of seeing in the Bank ; and the process seemed the perfection of mechanical ingenuity. The operations carried on in the Royal Mint at London fall quite short of what may be witnessed here. Altogether, Dublin is one of the finest cities that can well be imagined. My expectations, though certainly not very moderate, were far more than gratified. Mr. George Home, a native of Berwickshire (a man whose history is the most singular I have ever known), has added something to this beautiful city, by building the Royal Arcade, of which he is the sole proprietor. It consists of a great number of shops, which, being designed only for the sale of fancy goods, are finely decorated ; and being in a quarter greatly frequented, they let at very high rents, and bring in to the proprietor a very large income, which he receives weekly. He showed me great kindness. Procuring a car, he took me on Friday to see a part of the county of Wicklow. We visited the place where his Majesty embarked, and, what was better worth seeing, the wonderful scenery near the estate of Lord Powerscourt. On Saturday, the 24th, I left Dublin with regret, and arrived at Newry to dinner. In strolling through the streets of this large town, I noticed nothing remarkable. Early on Sabbath morning I set off for Rathfriland, where I was to preach in the forenoon an hour before the usual time for worship. I was a few minutes late, but I

found none waiting for me ; for, by a mistake, no notice had been sent ! I waited till the usual hour, and then preached to a considerable congregation, and intimated a collection for next Sabbath. Being greatly limited for time, my sermon was unusually short ; and this must have appeared strange to a people whose minister ‘prefaces’ the psalm for a full hour and gives, I believe, three discourses of proportionable length. Preached at Newry, in the afternoon, in Mr. Ker’s meeting house, and got £4, 10s. of collection ; and in the evening, at Warrenpoint, in Mr. Arnold’s chapel—collection only £1, 7s. 5½d. Returned to Newry at a very late hour, and found that a stranger had taken possession of one of the beds in my room. He awoke when I entered, and being alarmed, threatened me in a very wild way. Knowing how difficult it might be to convince an Irishman in such circumstances that he was the intruder, and not I, I left the room.

‘Pleased as I was with Ireland, I had no small satisfaction in turning my course homewards early on Monday morning. I came to Belfast in the forenoon, and had an agreeable meeting with Mr. Brotherston and the secretary. Having been separated for some time, we had each much to tell and much to hear. In the afternoon, accompanied by Dr. Hanna, we went to Carrickfergus, where Mr. B. was to preach in the evening. It was proposed that I should plead the cause of missions after Mr. B. had preached on an ordinary subject. We accordingly went into the pulpit. He, rather waggishly, at the end of his sermon, brought in all the topics that bore upon the missionary cause, and pre-occupied all the ground that I could take. Had I not been in the pulpit, with “the bands” on, I should have refused to open my mouth. But the die was cast ; and before a Professor of Divinity, and a group of ministers, I had the mortification of being compelled to enlarge *extempore* on a subject that had been almost exhausted by my colleague, who had the advantage of leisurely preparation. I have seldom felt

in a more awkward situation ; but I went on with seeming boldness, through utter desperation. On Tuesday, a public meeting was held in Belfast, for the purpose of forming an auxiliary to the Scottish Missionary Society. Mr. Brotherston gave a very neat speech, but read a part of it. I had no alternative but to go on *extempore*. Many speeches were made, and I hope the object of the meeting will be gained. We went to Maryville in the afternoon, and Mr. Brotherston preached in the evening. On Wednesday, the 28th, I took the steamboat for Glasgow, which I reached after a sail of fourteen hours. On Friday, the 30th, I returned to my own home, happy to find my family in much better health than when I left, and thankful for having been myself preserved while performing a journeying of nearly eleven hundred miles. I have never been so much pleased with any tour. The effect of our mission will not be known until another day ; but I do hope that, both as it respects the Irish and the heathen, it has not been altogether in vain in the Lord.'

The foregoing journals of his brief preaching tours in England and Ireland consist of bare notes—like shorthand entries—which his memory could extend over all their details, and through all their associations, for his own private reflection. What may have fatigued readers, as a mere record of dates, and names of places and persons, enabled him to recall and again live through a succession of unfamiliar scenes and incidents, sentiments and experiences. Certainly neither in substance nor in style were they such accounts of his travels as he would have allowed even any friends to see ; and he never intended or expected that any other eye than his own should scan them. He had not written them in the sense of *composing* them either as pictures or as skeleton-sketches ; he had jotted them down with no other care than that they should help him to keep a hold of and to bring back his travelling

associations whenever he wished to remember any of these. The friends who heard him, in incidental conversation, describe some of the scenes he had witnessed, or the days he had spent, in Ireland, were delighted with the graphic and lively style of his narrative, and would have been surprised, if they had got a glimpse of the bald notes, at the transformation of these into an animated and entertaining episode. He had powers of keen observation, both for the road and the lodging-place ; and a few of his descriptive strokes and touches gave a vivid idea of the characters and incidents he had there met with. He was often fortunate in his fellow-travellers, not only when these were clerical brethren, but even when they were complete strangers ; and he found many whose frank and lively talk beguiled the tedious way, and left both instructive and amusing recollections. He was not one of those passengers who made themselves angry or miserable on a stage-coach unless they were placed immediately *beside* the driver, and who had put forth every effort to engage or pre-occupy this favourite seat. The coachman was far from being an oracle, except about estates and mansions along the road, or about horses ; yet to sit on his left hand, and share his ‘leathern apron,’ and, still more, to draw him out of his dignity and reserve into a chatty vein, was the ambition of many who travelled frequently. To tempt Jehu into a communicative mood, cigars and wayside ‘drams’ were freely supplied by his privileged companion. Even clerical travellers crept near the coach-box, as if sure there to find wisdom and wit. Mr. Thomson, however, had no such fancy, but was ready to take any seat that offered itself, though not near the coachman’s ; and his chances for intelligent companionship were generally quite as fair as they would have been beside the coach-box. Travellers through Ireland in former days were wont to glean specimens of the wit of the native carmen, who were far more worthy of being studied than the more stolid coachmen of

England and Scotland ; and, doubtless, Mr. Thomson was amused by their clever volubility as he was struck with their dress, which was of many colours and patches, but of more holes ; with the dilapidated state of their cars ; with the harness, which had little that came from the saddler, or that resembled leather, but consisted of rope and string, yet seemed strong enough to guide and check the skeleton horses that drew the vehicles. Yet every driver was eloquent on the stateliness and luxury of his equipage, and disarmed passengers of their ill-humour about the slow pace at which they were advancing, by rehearsing how many ‘cups’ and prizes the *nondescript* in the shafts had won when a ‘racer’ in the days of youth. All Mr. Thomson’s encounters with this comic class of Irishmen were disposed of in the incidental small-talk which he held with his brethren about his travels during the first month after his return home ; and his permanent recollections were of a different kind. He had met with not a few Irish laymen who were far more distinguished for their piety and evangelical zeal than for their rank ; and this social fact in Ireland was at that time strange in Scotland. He chiefly, however, associated with Presbyterian clergymen, most of whom were Irishmen, presiding over congregations that were largely Irish ; hence he saw much that differed from what he was familiar with in his own country. The IRISH CHURCH was then in her entire supremacy and monopoly, saying in her heart, ‘I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow,’ least of all foreseeing the destiny which 1868 has, with but brief warning, announced. The Roman Catholics, led by O’Connell, were then ‘agitating’ for those political rights which were so obstinately withheld in the name and for the interest of the dominant church of the aristocratic and Protestant minority. Mr. Thomson strongly sympathized with the progress of civil and religious liberty, and differed from many of his Scottish brethren in advocating what was called ‘Catholic Emancipation.’ He

approved of civil equality for Papists as well as for Protestants, yet was not sanguine that the concession of it would altogether satisfy the Irish population, nor did he hope that Popery would cease to develop one of its main characteristics—that of aspiring to a thorough and intolerant ascendancy. He did not argue for Catholic Emancipation on the ground that Popery was becoming less dangerous ; for, on the contrary, he believed that Popery, whenever it acquired the power, would persecute ; but he had the conviction, that in the Protestant truth and zeal of the British evangelical churches, there was enough to prevent Popish ascendancy, and to preserve inviolate those liberties which rampant Popery would extinguish. He was no party politician, but he took a deep interest in the principal measures recommended by the Liberal Opposition ; and it was the able and luminous exposition of these by the *Edinburgh Review* that drew him to be a constant reader of this periodical from its very commencement, though the Berwickshire authorities traced every copy of what they reckoned a ‘revolutionary’ organ that came into their bounds, and they secretly marked every man who harboured it as ‘disloyal.’ Mr. Thomson was not repelled by the scornful articles which occasionally appeared in the *Review* against evangelical views and zeal, nor did he refuse to attend to the instructions of a staff of earnest and enlightened politicians, and to admire their bold championship of progress, merely because one or two of them occasionally ventured beyond their province, and discoursed not more flippantly than ignorantly about sacred things—proving themselves not only worthless theologians, but incapable critics of theology. He did not consult the *Edinburgh Review* for theology ; and he could profit by its political wisdom without receiving any harm from the sneers at religion which were sometimes indulged in, and which he could despise, even before they were known to issue from an *ordained clergyman*, whose conscience allowed him alternately to stand in a pulpit

of the Church of England, and to 'sit in the chair of the scorner.' Mr. Thomson could enjoy the witty articles which the Rev. Sydney Smith wrote on Catholic Emancipation and the position of the Irish Church; though, in reference to Scripture doctrine, he would have attached far greater importance to the views of a plain Scotch elder than to those of the clerical wag. He would have thought it foolish to decline learning politics from that admirable organ, merely on the ground that at times it presumed to give lessons on a different subject, about which it was profoundly ignorant and shamefully flippant. He had thus studied the various measures which the Liberal Opposition advocated, and he had formed a mature judgment on them, many years before public opinion and a favourable crisis extorted them from Government. When, at a later date, the *Scotsman* was started, and gave a most uncompromising and persistent testimony against misrule and monopoly, he became a constant reader of this journal, and appreciated the political service which in trying days it rendered. Yet his politics never accompanied him into the pulpit, where 'he was determined to know nothing but Christ and Him crucified.' At the time of his visit to Ireland, Catholic Emancipation was agitating England and Scotland, and convulsing Ireland; and with this question the name of Daniel O'Connell was invariably associated. The Scottish minister, when in Dublin, was eager to see and hear the great leader who wielded an unprecedented amount of influence over his countrymen. The Presbyterian clergymen of Ulster spoke slightly of O'Connell's eloquence, and its effects both at the bar and in the rostrum; and they were under such prejudices as led them to deny his transcendent faculties for popular persuasion, and for organizing and ruling millions of men. They were astonished to find that the stranger from Scotland had any curiosity about the 'demagogue,' who, as they affected to believe, derived all his importance and power

from the preposterous ‘gullibility’ of the Irish democracy, and from his boundless effrontery, trickery, and deceit. In none of the Ulster clerical circles was there an admiring word for the achievements of O’Connell as a barrister or a popular orator, and for the immense and varied energy of intellect which they required ; but every mention of his name drew forth expressions of abhorrence and derision against his lawless tactics and his Popish and treasonable designs. Mr. Thomson had, indeed, quite as little sympathy as was felt in Ulster with the Agitator’s Romanism either of faith or of practice, and with many of his arts for arousing the Irish people, and for coercing the British Government ; but he could not suppress his admiration of the prodigious force of will, and the extraordinary resources of eloquence and wit, which had given O’Connell pre-eminence in Irish politics, and made him leader in the grand movement for Emancipation. The memory of the Irish people for a deliverer is so faint and fickle, that *O’Connell dead* gives no idea of what the *living O’Connell* was, even as contemplated by strangers. Mr. Thomson, when in Dublin, and afterwards repeatedly in London, had his eager curiosity to see and hear O’Connell gratified ; and he more than once enjoyed the opportunity of witnessing a great display of the latter’s peculiar oratory. The versatile chief was in his glory when, upon native soil, he addressed a vast concourse of his countrymen,—the trumpet tones of his indignation not more distinctly heard by the verge of the crowd than were the rollicking bursts or the side-escapes of his laughter, and the quivering notes of his pathos. His spirit and manner were wisely more subdued when he spoke in the House of Commons or on the platform of a London meeting. Still, even in this the advanced period of his life, he gained a high place among English orators, and showed that, if he had entered Parliament in youth, he would soon have been without a superior in brilliancy and power. Both his wit and eloquence flashed forth with the quickness

and unexpectedness of genius. On one occasion, when rising to harangue a large Dublin assembly, he began in a very serious strain. He was getting old, he said ; and instead of proceeding, as he was wont, defiantly to assure Tories and Whigs that he would live for another fifty years, he added, that he must soon appear before the Divine Judge, and that he trembled at the prospect, unless he had first achieved the deliverance of his native land. A countryman, who was too unsophisticated to regard this as rhetoric along with wretched taste, very kindly exclaimed, ‘Why should you be afraid? Your honour’s life has been a right good one!’ ‘Oh! may the great God say so!’ immediately interjected O’Connell, with the deepest solemnity, as he clasped his hands and devoutly looked heavenwards ; and then, pointing to the man who had interrupted him, without a moment’s delay, said, ‘*and may you hold your tongue!*’ With what grandly simple strokes of pathos could he reach the sympathies of his countrymen! On the day of his release from prison, through the judgment of the House of Lords, he appeared in the balcony of his house before the immense crowds that had accompanied him. We know how Cicero, on a similar occasion, began to address his rejoicing fellow-citizens ; and the long-winded opening sentence, with its score of lines and involved clauses, has been as full of perplexity and pain to British youth as it was of pathos to the old ‘Quirites.’ We can conjecture, too, with what an elaborate outburst of reminiscences, reflections, and present emotions, Lord Brougham, in like circumstances, would have commenced his oration. O’Connell, however, in this nobly simple and straightforward style, introduced his remarks : ‘So, you are glad to see me at home again!’ and immediately the many thousands of hearers threw themselves on the ground in Popish thanksgiving, and there was such a scene of general weeping for joy as can have been seldom witnessed. Many minutes elapsed before the speaker was

allowed to proceed,—so overpowering had been the impression produced by the ‘simple touch of nature,’ which made the vast multitude ‘akin’ to the speaker. At several important public meetings in the metropolis, Mr. Thomson was fortunate enough to hear characteristic displays of the great Irishman’s wit and eloquence. He was present at a great gathering on the question of Slavery, when Brougham was in the chair, and O’Connell delivered a most powerful, yet obviously quite an unprepared speech ; still the general audience gave louder and more prolonged applause to the performance of Mr. George Thompson, who had recently come out as a *lecturer*, than to the addresses of Brougham and O’Connell,—the carefully selected words of the lecturer, and his enthusiastic utterance of them, producing an impression which the less elaborate matter and the less fervid manner of the two more celebrated orators failed to make. The subject of this Memoir, however, never in the House of Commons heard any of those great speeches of O’Connell, which even the fastidious Jeffrey, who had also no personal liking for the Irish leader, was constrained to describe as ‘terrible’ through their power and earnestness. In the course of those Parliamentary debates which he attended on Irish affairs, he was specially struck with Mr. Sheils’ brilliant and impressive rhetoric, though he did not admire the wild screams, alternating with gasps, which gave it forth, and the grotesque gesticulations which accompanied it. He often said, that if the same extravagant externals had marked any man in the pulpit, no genius would have made his preaching popular ; though, as he admitted, Sheils’ voice and manner possessed one main element of genuine oratory—they expressed intense earnestness.

At the time of his visit to Ireland, two of the Presbyterian Synods in the province of Ulster held their annual meetings. What was called *the* ‘Synod of Ulster,’ did not, by the orthodoxy and zeal of its ministers, the talent of its debates,

and the liveliness of its proceedings, call forth much of his esteem. Not a few of the ministers had fallen into Socinianism, yet had neither left nor been expelled from the evangelical fellowship, though mutual distrust, alienation, and a total want of co-operation resulted. We cannot wonder that, as long as Socinians and Trinitarians were promiscuously found in the same Church, any peace which existed was a hollow truce, and indicated that, for the time, gospel truth was shamefully dormant or compliant. When that Church did not fight against the insidious and dangerous enemies that had sprung up within her camp, and among her very champions, why should she make war upon external foes that were less deadly from being less treacherous? The evangelical life and functions of that Church must have been paralyzed, or suspended, when she quietly allowed the most antichristian of all heretics—the deniers of her divine Lord, and of His atoning and meritorious death—to grow up and multiply within her communion, and to be treated and trusted as her sons and His servants, even though they introduced and defended something worse than that ‘other gospel’ against which, and also against the ‘angel’ preaching it, St. Paul hurled his most scathing curse! In a few years, however, after the date of Mr. Thomson’s visit, the two parties awoke in keen mutual antagonism, and showed that they could not live together in one Church. The strife issued in the complete separation of those who differed widely from each other on all the cardinal doctrines of Christianity; and the Socinians were compelled to withdraw from the Synod of Ulster, whose creed and fellowship they had long mocked and betrayed, though the Synod itself was deeply culpable in permitting such an association with error. During the conflict which ended in this separation, the deliberations and debates of the Synod of Ulster were no longer marked by the languor and dulness which our stranger from Scotland had observed. They displayed a vivacity and eloquence which he would have greatly enjoyed.

Dr. Henry Cooke had come forward to stir the stagnant waters, as he has at times interfered to 'trouble' the still and peaceful waters ; and probably the Irish exuberance and combativeness of his wit and declamation were never put forth either so brilliantly or so profitably as in his encounters with Socinians, and in his single combats with their most formidable champion, Dr. Montgomery. Many a meeting of the Synod of Ulster did Dr. Cooke subsequently enliven with his volubility of showy speech, and his readiness of plausible debate, throwing sleepy audiences into moods of 'laughter' and 'applause' by jests and fancies, which, though neither original nor select, were redeemed from commonplace by their fresh and ingenious application. But on some of these occasions he was animated and amusing without discretion and charity ; for, in expelling dulness from the Synod, he put concord also to flight, and not a little acrimony entered along with his liveliness. He was raised to a throne above the moderator's chair ; but his energetic dictatorship called forth sturdy resistance from a few of the younger brethren who were not tamed by his indignation and scorn, or paralyzed by the thought of his holding some of the strings of the *Regium Donum* purse ; and his reign neither suppressed debating, nor made it less keen and exciting. He was also 'abroad' in Ulster as a political power and stimulus—a lively mouth-piece to Tories and Orangemen whenever existing monopolies and abuses were to be defended and praised, or progress and reform were to be denounced and ridiculed. 'No surrender' came out in thunder and lightning from him, as from an old Londonderry cannon ; and his oratory smelt far more of gunpowder than did the speeches of his military associates. At Orange demonstrations he was an invaluable auxiliary ; and though he was not a clergyman of the Irish Church who was fed by dainties at the royal table, but only a 'Presbyterian parson' who picked up the *Regium Donum* crumbs that fell from that table, yet he contributed not only

the most eloquent and witty, but the most inflammatory and martial addresses ; and even when, as generally happened, eloquence and wit passed into mere ranting and ribaldry, his were the most racy and hearty. His fond speaking about the 'battle of the Boyne' was as inexhaustible as the waters of that river, and the 'rotten eggs' which he threw against all whom he disliked were most plenteously supplied. He was engaged in defending all the antiquated creed and policy of Toryism after the Catholic Emancipation era of 1829 ; and whilst eulogizing William, the hero of the Boyne, he had nothing but hatred to express against William's toleration principles, and against their modern extension.

He was known in Scotland through what was said to be *his own report* of a debate held in Belfast on Church Establishments with Dr. Ritchie of Edinburgh, who had long been noted for his effectively humorous advocacy of Voluntaryism. To have witnessed a fair encounter between the comic powers of the Scot and those of the Irishman, would have been a rare entertainment, though the lovers of logic might have wished the controversy in the hands of other combatants. That report was concocted to dupe readers into the belief that Dr. Cooke was the easy victor. It amended and supplemented his speeches, giving new pith, point, and brilliancy to arguments and jests which had been originally feeble, and adding many new ones ; whilst the treatment which it gave to his opponent's speeches was exactly the reverse. The reporter weakened and mutilated Dr. Ritchie's arguments and jokes, and disbanded not a few that were too impracticable to be answered or marred. All the witty and sarcastic things which he felt Dr. Cooke *ought to have said*, he inserted ; and the racy replies which he wished Dr. Ritchie had not spoken, he conveniently omitted. The leader of the Irish Presbyterians, however, was often really great as a pulpit orator. When he kept to doctrinal or practical themes, he expounded and applied

these with rare power and eloquence ; but when he took a text that tempted him to ‘spiritualize,’ he constructed a most fantastic, ludicrous, and unprofitable interpretation. He had a fancy-sermon on the furniture of Solomon’s temple ; and when he preached in Edinburgh during the sitting of the General Assembly, he chose for his subject the visit of the queen of Sheba to Solomon—the wise king representing the Scottish Kirk, whose fame had reached Belfast, and the queen representing the astonished visitor, who found that the half of the Kirk’s wisdom and glory had not been told.

Ulster and its Presbyterian Synod were, at the time when Mr. Thomson visited them, marked by a languor and dulness which could not be found when Dr. Henry Cooke was ‘in his glory,’ as an ecclesiastical and political agitator.

The Secession minister of Coldstream, who advocated the cause of missions before many Irish and English congregations, had not neglected, in his pastoral sphere, to do what he could to excite a deep interest in the work of heathen evangelization, to which British churches were bestirring themselves. He promptly supported those Societies which had been formed in London and Edinburgh to supply Bibles and missionaries ; and he was eager to organize county and even congregational auxiliaries. Before referring to the able and hearty assistance which he got from George Buchan, Esq. of Kelloe, and the Rev. Mr. Hunter of Swinton (afterwards Dr. Hunter of the Tron Church, Edinburgh), both of whom protested indignantly against the ridicule and opposition which the Merse representatives of their own Church—the Establishment—offered to missionary enterprise, we may mention that all Mr. Thomson’s clerical brethren in the Secession were ready to follow his example, in stimulating their people to identify themselves closely and permanently with the spread of the gospel, and to contribute their money and their prayers in systematic effort. They preached and delivered speeches to their own and to

each others' congregations ; and one of them, the Rev. Robert Hall of Kelso, launched his sermon in a printed form, though he had the strongest reluctance to become an author. A powerful compulsion—from his own sense of duty, aided by the solicitation of many brethren and friends—must have been upon him, urging him to overcome his constitutional shrinking from the press ; and it is pleasant to think that this instance of resolute self-denial yielded the good man such a deep and abiding satisfaction as few authors have derived from publications of far greater magnitude in every respect, and that '*the sermon*,' as he was wont emphatically to call it, never caused him the least regret or mortification, or excited in him a wish to forget it ; but whenever his eye fell upon it, at home or anywhere else, he gave it a pleased and grateful recognition, as due to an only child that had brought honour and no sorrow ! That the sermon was weighty and impressive, was acknowledged not only by his own people to whom it was preached, but by all the ministers who heard it ; and they prevailed on him to set about its publication. Both when it was in manuscript and when it was in 'proof,' he carried it repeatedly to Coldstream, where Mr. Thomson listened to many readings of it, and was invited to suggest corrections and improvements ; but Mr. Hall had a tenacious confidence in the accuracy and elegance of every phrase which Mr. Hall had written, and the critic soon desisted from proposing amendments, which were vehemently resisted and invariably rejected,—the author always seeing, with new assurance, that he had been somehow directed, in the act of composition, to fix upon faultless language.

A whole visit was engrossed with a debate on the title-page of the sermon, after Mr. Thomson had read '*The State of the Heathen World Disclosed, and the Necessity of making every exertion to put them,*' etc., and hinted that a change of '*them*' into '*it*' would agree better with the '*world*' and its fashion in grammar ; but the author insisted on having the reasons

and the precedents for the suggested change repeated many times, though he as often contemptuously dismissed them as worthless. At length the sermon was issued, and the following letter to Mr. Thomson, who endorses it as 'a curiosity,' accompanied a presentation copy. The writer brings the publication before his correspondent as a novelty, and makes no mention of the several critical interviews which had passed between them in vain; and, probably, the letter was only an autograph circular which he sent to each of his brethren in the presbytery. Not a few points will be specially suggestive and amusing to those readers who have heard much of the excellent but eccentric Mr. Hall:—

'REV. DEAR SIR,—On Saturday last I returned from Edinburgh, where I had been assisting at the Lord's Supper in Rose Street. On Wednesday the 15th, the sermon so long expected was at last given to the public. From our own ministers, and also from some of the Church ministers in Edinburgh, I have learned that there need be no doubt as to its being well received by the Christian world. They consider the subject itself to be of the first importance, and in the Sermon, appendix, and notes, the discussion deeply interesting. I have sent you a copy, and present it to you in token of my respect, and which you will be pleased to accept. There are the last three pages of the appendix and notes, which I thought proper to add after I had sent off the manuscript to be printed.

'If what has been written shall be judged by you to be calculated for giving a fresh impulse to the mind of the Christian public, and to be helpful to the great and good work, you will no doubt find that it will be proper to take some method to make the publishing of the Sermon known to your congregation. In what manner this is to be done, must of course be left to yourself. As it is my design, whatever may be the profits of sale, to present them in the form of a pious offering

to the Biblical Institution in behalf of the unenlightened nations of the Gentiles, I may be permitted, without being considered as personally interested, to give you my opinion—not to direct you, but to assist you in directing yourself in this matter. As the matter is altogether spiritual, I think the shortest and most effectual way would be, to take occasion at the close of public worship, to intimate that you have in the course of the week received a Sermon just now published by the Rev. Mr. Hall of Kelso,—the title of it is, “The State of the Heathen World disclosed, and the necessity of making every exertion to put them in possession of the means of salvation set forth.” The text is from Acts xvi. 9: “And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.” You may then add—“As I CONSIDER IT NECESSARY THAT ALL OF US SHOULD HAVE THIS SERMON, I make this intimation that those who may be desirous to have it, will stop and give me their names, as no copies of the Sermon will be sent but such as are ordered.” I beg it be distinctly understood that this I merely suggest, leaving it entirely to yourself to follow the leadings of your own mind. When conversing lately with Mr. Ure, he mentioned that he meant to take the above method.

‘You will write me a few lines by the return of post, informing me of your having received the Sermon. I need not add that I trust you will give me your judgment of it, and that candidly, whether it be to me pleasant or unpleasant. I must not forget to request you will present my kind respects to Mrs. Thomson.—I remain, my dear sir, yours most truly,

‘R. HALL.

‘KELSO, 21st Nov. 1815.

‘N.B.—It will be proper that you inform those who may wish to have a copy of the sermon that the price of it is 1s. 6d.

‘REV. MR. THOMSON.’

An anecdote, illustrative of the interest which Mr. Hall took

in '*the sermon*' and its good name, may be here repeated. One day he went into the kitchen to make payment to a man who had brought a load of coals. A copy of '*the sermon*' was lying on the '*dresser*'—'*Leezie*' (a faithful and notable, though rather wilful, domestic) having probably taken her morning lesson from some of the passages; and the carter—a shrewd observer of men and their humours—taking up, and then respectfully laying down the publication, said, as if to himself, '*There's that grand sermon o' Mr. Hall's.*' '*What's that? what's that, John, ye say?*' eagerly asked the author. '*Atweel, sir,*' answered John, giving the explanation with more apparent than real reluctance, '*I was only saying what I heard Mr. Lundie*' (the parish minister) '*say the other day. I had driven coals for him, and he was payin' me, as ye are, when, takin' up a bit buikie that lay on the table near the coal account, he made the observe, "There's that grand sermon o' Mr. Hall's."*' '*Just so, John; just so,*' rejoined Mr. Hall; and we have forgotten whether or not the gratified author gave John an additional sixpence. A week or two afterwards Mr. Hall was taking his usual promenade in the Market-place of Kelso, when he happened to catch a glimpse of the carter, whom, by shouting and gesticulation, he summoned to approach him. '*John,*' asked the minister, '*what did Mr. Lundie say to you?*' '*Oh! Mr. Hall,*' responded John, '*he said that they were prime coals—prime coals, sir.*' '*I was not asking,*' rejoined Mr. Hall, testily, '*about your coals, but about the—the sermon,*' and he never sought to explain which of the innumerable sermons published he meant. '*Weel, then, sir,*' answered the carter, puzzled at the aim of the interrogator, '*Mr. Lundie said, "There's that grand sermon o' Mr. Hall's."*' '*That's it, sir.*' '*That's all, John,*' concluded the minister, turning his back abruptly, and walking slowly away, whilst John stood in wonder.

Yet, on occasions when young men or ministers conspired

to play upon his peculiarities for some amusement, Mr. Hall could easily be both formidable and dignified. During a meeting of Synod in Edinburgh, two licentiates, whose fathers had been ministers that enjoyed close intimacy with Mr. Hall, happened to be walking together. They saw the dignified form of the Kelso minister approaching them, and they proposed that they should introduce each other to him, and plead the friendship which he had held with their fathers, in the hope of no little merriment from his reception of them. They brought him to a standstill, and carefully announced who they and their sires were ; whereupon Mr. Hall surprised them by answering, 'Ye are young men coming into the world, and I am an old man going out of the world ; it's no worth my while to make your acquaintance. Good morning, gentlemen.' He could have made it worth *their* while to listen to the detailed experience of an old man ; but he had suspected that they were seeking for fun rather than for wisdom, and he had no wish that they should pass from being strangers into the terms of 'acquaintanceship,' merely with the view of deriving some amusement from his ancient habits ; and this 'canna-be-fashed' style of refusing to know the young Levites, or, in the future, to exchange more words with them, was quite inimitable ! On a rainy day he was met in the streets of Edinburgh by a very loquacious friend, who often assailed him with banter, and who was eagerly opening his lips to pour forth a volley. 'Shut your mouth, sir,' exclaimed Mr. Hall, in authoritative tones, 'and keep the rain out and the nonsense in !' He was less fortunate with Dr. Belfrage of Slateford, against whose polished and dignified demeanour he had muttered audibly, 'Aye high and mighty—high and mighty.' 'There's a pair of us, Mr. Hall,' replied the doctor ; and certainly Mr. Hall would have kept any one in company for an imposing mien and carriage.

From notes, similar to those which he daily wrote when

travelling in Ulster and in the north of England, we can obtain varied yet uncoloured views as to how Mr. Thomson was occupied when at home. With 1818 he began to keep a 'Commonplace Book;' and in the opening sentences he sets forth the character of the commonplaces to be recorded, and his private aims for making such a daily register. The reader must bear in mind, whilst going over the loose and disjointed notes as here extracted, that they were meant for no other eye than the writer's.

'It is not my design,' Mr. Thomson remarks, 'to keep what is called a religious diary. Agreeably to the title, I mean it to be a "Commonplace Book and Daily Register of Occurrences." My chief object, indeed, is to make it a record of the manner in which I spend my time; and I shall give daily a very short account of my studies, of the books which I read, etc. etc. Whatever I am engaged in will be noticed; and I wish to be particularly careful in marking the way in which I proceed in my *ministerial* work. It will therefore be proper to mention the places where I preach, or examine, or visit, etc. Diets of examination and visitation have not hitherto been attended with due regularity, and I have often been at a loss where to begin, and in what order to proceed; besides, the particular periods at which I have examined or visited at particular places, have often escaped my memory. For similar reasons, the visitation of the sick and the afflicted must be noticed in this journal among other ministerial duties.

'The occurrences of every day, and of every kind—unless such as are utterly trivial—will be recorded. It would, however, be improper to be minute in noticing what should, as matters of course, be attended to at certain hours of each day. Hence I shall not mention the time spent in secret and family devotion; though to quicken and assist me in the discharge of such duties of first importance is, I trust, one of my chief objects in keeping this record.

‘Whatever observations of importance may occur on passing events, or in the course of my reading, will also be inserted. . . .

‘I hope the Lord will bless this attempt to prevent idleness. It is my heart’s desire and prayer that He may enable me to set a just value on my time, and lead me so to occupy it that I may grow in knowledge and piety, and thus be rendered useful to my dear family, friends, and congregation, for whose well-being my anxiety is great, though my exertions have hitherto been feeble and inefficient. I wish the following considerations to be constantly before my mind: *1st*, Time is short, and I know not how soon I must give an account of my stewardship. *2d*, The divine commands, urging me to diligence, are numerous and explicit. *3d*, The opportunities and advantages afforded me for private studies and public labours are such as would terribly aggravate my condemnation, should they continue to be unimproved. *4th*, The promises to the diligent and faithful are “exceeding great and precious.” *5th*, Maxims like the following—though not from Scripture—deserve to be remembered: “Nulla dies sine linea.” — By reading only 100 pages a day, one may get through more than 70 volumes in the year.—Luther’s saying, “To have prayed well is to have studied well.” The following remark by Josephus may put many Christian ministers to the blush: “I was ashamed myself to permit any laziness of disposition to have more influence over me, than the delight of taking pains in such studies as were useful.” [Then follow several admirable sentences from Samuel Johnson, whose moralizings on the *improvement of time* have never been surpassed by any sage, ancient or modern.] My plan of study I shall not now lay down, as, if I am enabled to adhere to it, it will be sufficiently developed in the sequel of these jottings. I am well aware that he who forms many plans will often fail to carry them into effect; but I know, too, that he who forms no plans will make no improvement.

‘*Thursday* (1st January 1818). *Morning*.—Read first chapter of Leviticus, with *Brown’s Notes*, etc., and part of De Lolme on the Constitution of England. *Forenoon*.—Read in Alison’s volume of Sermons, and wrote the preceding introduction. *Afternoon*.—Went to Wark; visited John B——, who has been for some weeks confined by fever; examined the young people of the Sabbath school, and was much pleased with their progress; preached on Rev. i. 18; returned between nine and ten o’clock. A friend being with me, there could be no studying before bedtime.

‘*Friday*, 2d. *Forenoon*.—Read in Brown’s Bible, and Alison’s 2d and 3d Sermons. Began to transcribe a sermon on Matt. xxviii. 6. This is one of a series which I intend to publish under the title of “Consolation for Mourners.” *Afternoon*.—Read Blair’s 15th Lecture on Rhetoric, and transcribed more of my sermon. *Evening*.—Read part of De Lolme at intervals, when down stairs. *N.B.*—I wish always to have some book in the parlour, that I may read when detained there. Read Saurin’s sermon on the Resurrection of Christ. It is worthy of a repeated perusal, for its strength of argument and fervour of eloquence. Buck, in his *Theological Dictionary*, gives a skeleton of it, and a long quotation.

‘*Saturday*, 3d Jan.—Went to Stockbridge to preach, for the first time since Mr. Campbell’s death. The journey from Dunse to S—— unpleasant and dangerous. It blew a hurricane; and had the snow fallen earlier, so as only to have covered the road, it would have been almost impossible to have found my way across the moors.

‘*Sabbath*, 4th Jan.—Preached at Stockbridge twice, on —— . Rode in the afternoon to Dunbar, and preached in the evening. The house was more than filled. A collection was made for Mrs. Campbell and family; it is expected to be made up to £20.

‘*Monday*.—Preached at Belhaven, and baptized a child of

Captain H——. Went to Linton in the evening, and was kindly received and hospitably entertained by Dr. Jamieson, whom I had long wished and promised to visit.

‘*Tuesday, 6th Jan.*—Returned to Dunbar to dinner, and went to Dunglas, to spend the night with Mr. and Mrs. Bell. The last night I had spent in their house was one of sore distress to my wife. She and our three children had gone for sea-bathing to Berwick, where I left them to attend a meeting of Synod. I spent a week in Edinburgh, and returned by way of Dunglas to Berwick, where, on entering my brother’s house, I found, to my astonishment and grief, that James, my youngest son, whom I had left in perfect health, was numbered with the dead. Every attempt had been made in vain to give me timely notice. He died on the 14th Sept. 1815. He was the third child who had been taken from us by death; but we cherish the hope that they are all now in the place where is no death, and where, “out of the mouths of babes and sucklings,” the Lord will “perfect His own praise.”

‘*Wednesday, 7th.*—Returned home by way of Stockbridge and Dunse. In connection with the memory of former bereavement, I had cause for gratitude in finding all my family in good health.

‘*Thursday, 8th.*—Spent the forenoon in writing sermon for Sabbath. Went in the afternoon to Cornhill, and visited all the families there belonging to my congregation; preached there in the evening, and baptized. Returned past ten o’clock. John B——, a young and respectable member of my congregation, was buried this day. His death was very unexpected, though he has been prostrated by fever for some weeks. He has left a pregnant widow and two children. May the Lord support them in their need!

‘*Friday, 9th. Morning.*—Read in Alison, and Brown’s Bible. Afterwards in De Lolme, and in Blair’s Rhetoric. In the 17th Lecture, he gives from Cicero an example of *climax*,

well fitted to touch a Christian's heart : "Facinus est vincire civem Romanum, scelus verberare ; prope parricidium necare ; quid dicam *in crucem tollere*?" In the evening read a part of Homer with Thomas Turnbull, and wrote my lecture for Sabbath.

'*Sabbath, 11th.*—Lectured and preached. At the close of the service I read to the congregation a part of the first Report of the Berwickshire Bible Society, which was drawn up by Mr. Buchan of Kelloe. Blessed be God for raising up so able and pious a man among the great in this county. The Report was intended—by giving a true account of the Society, and detailing the most interesting information about Bible Societies in general—to silence, if not to convince, the enemies of such institutions, and to excite a deeper public interest ; and it is admirably fitted to gain the ends. It is lamentable to think that the chief foes to Bible Societies are ministers of the Establishment. Surely this Report, if they will only read it, must put them to silence and to shame. I am happy in reflecting that I originated the motion to prepare and print a Report. Several members were against it at first ; but at length the secretaries were appointed to draw it up. Mr. Buchan took on himself the labour of love, and has done it well. May God reward and bless him ! In the evening, preached and afterwards read a portion of *Boston's Memoirs*.

'*Monday, 12th. Forenoon.*—Visited James S——, who has been long unwell ; and Betty B——, now a pregnant widow with two fatherless children. She had borne her heavy affliction better than I expected. My heart bled for her ; and having heard that she might be in destitute circumstances, I offered to give her money, which, however, she modestly and with tears of gratitude declined, assuring me that she really was not at present in need. Having had my father and a few friends at dinner and tea, nothing was done in the afternoon. In the evening I visited that godly woman, G. Watson, who is

again afflicted. I had as usual, when seeing her, great satisfaction. . . .

‘*Saturday, 7th February.*—Began to write a Critical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, similar to that which I lately wrote on the Epistle to the Ephesians, but was interrupted by Mr. Hume, who wished an exchange of pulpits on Sabbath, as there were three persons to be publicly rebuked in the congregation, and he was yet unordained. Spent with him all the day.

‘*Sabbath, 8th.*—Went to Yetholm; lectured and preached, baptized a child, and rebuked three scandalous offenders. Returned to hear Mr. Hume preach in the evening.

‘*Monday, 9th.*—After Mr. Hume left, Mrs. T. and I went to Hawkslaw, where we had engaged to dine and spend the day.

‘*Tuesday, 10th.*—Went to Dunse to attend the committee meeting of the Bible Society. At my request, a deputation of the committee was appointed to attend a public meeting at Coldstream on the second Tuesday of March, for the purpose of forming an auxiliary branch of the Society in Coldstream. I was desired to request of my neighbour—the parish minister, Mr. Scott—that he would allow the meeting to be held in his church; and if he refused, the ministers and others appointed to attend agreed to meet in my place of worship.

‘*Wednesday, 11th.*—Having met with Mr. Scott, I informed him of the appointment made yesterday at Dunse. He, however, not only refused the church for us to meet in, but expressed his firm determination to discountenance the Bible Society by every means in his power. *Afternoon.*—Went with Mr. Cox to take the list of the persons to be examined to-night. Read Brown and Fisher’s Catechisms on *Adoption*, and examined on that subject in the evening. I afterwards visited R. Watson and his wife, and prayed with them. They are still in great distress, but bearing up with most exemplary patience and piety.

‘*Thursday, 12th.*—I met again with Mr. Scott (parish minister), and found him completely enraged about the proposed meeting of the Bible Society. He had, he says, informed Sir John Marjoribanks, who threatened that if Mr. Buchan of Kelloe came here for such a purpose, he would put him in the lock-up house! Mr. Scott, when I told him that it was not in Sir John’s power, had to confess that it was an empty threat. Still he went on to abuse the Bible Society and its supporters, alleging that we were throwing away money which should have been given to support the poor [as the apostolic *Judas* was the first to allege]; that we were sending Bibles to those who could not read them; that many were much better men in heathen countries than those possessing the Bible, etc. How deplorable that a large parish should be under the care of a man holding, and acting but too consistently with, such views, and that the great majority of his clerical brethren in this presbytery agree with him! In the evening went to Cornhill, where I examined the Sabbath scholars and preached. Before going to bed, read part of Baines’ *History of the French Revolution*. . .

‘*Sabbath, 15th.*—Lectured in the forenoon on the first four verses of the Epistle to the Romans. Preached in the afternoon, and again in the evening. Afterwards visited R. Watson and Mrs. Gourlay.

‘*Monday, 16th.*—Went by Berwick to Ayton, and spent the evening pleasantly in Mr. Ure’s house, with him, and Messrs. Davidson and Lee, who had been assisting at the communion. My business at Berwick having prevented me from being in time to preach or hear at Ayton, I did not go to Mr. Ure’s until after dinner.

‘*Tuesday, 17th.*—Went along with Mr. Ure and Mr. Calder to Dunbar, to be present at Mr. Jack’s ordination. His father, Dr. Jack of Manchester, preached on Jude 3, and Mr. Brown of North Berwick gave the charge. After the ordination service, Mr. Ross passed part of his trials for licence. This young man

gave a display of splendid talents, and was licensed in the evening to preach the gospel as a missionary in Persia. He is a member of the Church of Scotland ; but having attended our Divinity Hall two years, he was licensed by the Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh, because, owing to his object, expedition was necessary, and no Established Presbytery would license him until he had studied at all their classes during their full period. . . .

‘ *Thursday, 19th.*—Spent the forenoon in preparing for Newtown. In the afternoon went to Wark, examined the scholars, preached, and baptized.

‘ *Friday, 20th.*—Went to Newtown, by Stichel and Sweethope. *Saturday.*—Preached, and heard a good sermon from Mr. Henderson of Lauder. *Sabbath.*—A most substantial action-sermon from Mr. Elder. I “fenced,” gave a table address, and preached in the evening. *Monday.*—Heard a very impressive sermon from Mr. Bradley of Lilliesleaf, and preached after him.

‘ *Tuesday, 24th.*—Returned by Kelso, where I spent the afternoon with Mr. Hall, dining with him and Mr. M‘Lay. Called on Mr. Lundie, to request his attendance at the formation of our Bible Society. Came to Birgham, where, after examining about sixty Sabbath scholars, I preached.

‘ *Wednesday, 25th.*—Occupied with planting fruit-trees in my new garden ; afterwards read a number of pamphlets about the conduct of Mr. Andrew Thomson of St. George’s Church, Edinburgh, in refusing to preach on the day appointed for the funeral of the Princess Charlotte. He was very unjustly accused by scurrilous assailants ; but in the replies of ‘ *Candidus*,’ ‘ *Scotus*,’ etc., he is fully vindicated, and duly honoured. Read also three pamphlets, addressed to Dr. M‘Crie and Mr. Thomson, regarding a parody which appeared in the first number of *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*.

‘ *Friday, 27th.*—I have resolved to lecture on Jonah alter-

nately with the Epistle to the Romans, and began this forenoon to prepare the introductory lecture. Called on several sick people. Saw Mr. Cupples, surgeon, and requested him to invite his brother, the parish minister of Legerwood, to attend our meeting for the formation of a Bible Society. Read sermons on the death of the Princess. Wrote a long letter to Mr. Balmer, and a string of Resolutions to be laid before the Bible Society meeting. Went to Langton to arrange with Dr. Brown about this meeting, and spent a most agreeable afternoon with him. . . .

‘Tuesday, 10th March.—This has been a memorable and delightful day. The deputation from the Berwickshire Bible Society met here to form an association in aid of the funds. George Buchan, Esq. of Kelloe (in the chair), and Young Trotter, Esq., of Broomhouse Paper Mill, the Rev. Dr. Brown, and the Rev. Messrs. Lundie, Hall, Hunter, Cupples, Laurie, Lee, and Balmer attended, and spoke. The audience was very large, and everything was well conducted. After a short speech from the chairman, I read the Resolutions, and addressed the meeting for about twenty minutes. Dr. Brown seconded the Resolutions, and spoke well for about the same length of time. Mr. Hunter followed, in a most eloquent speech, which deeply impressed all on the platform and in the pews. Mr. Balmer spoke briefly, but with admirable judgment. He was succeeded by Mr. Lundie, who held on for forty minutes, blending much humour, good sense, and close argument. In those addresses, the objections brought by enemies against Bible Societies were examined and triumphantly repelled. The members of the Established Church, who had heard their minister utter a pitiful strain of abuse against the movement on Sabbath last, must have been greatly struck with the views of his brethren. His opposition has, in various ways, been useful, and can have done harm only to himself. There never was a meeting of any kind in the place which has given

such universal satisfaction. All the ministers, except Mr. Hunter, who was pre-engaged, dined and spent the afternoon with me.

‘*Wednesday, 11th.*—The fore part of this day was passed in the company of several of the ministers. In the evening, the office-bearers of the “Coldstream Branch Auxiliary Bible Society” met to adopt the best method for raising funds, etc. Messrs. C—— and M—— were appointed to call on the inhabitants of the town for subscriptions as soon as possible. This meeting of the Committee of Directors was opened and closed with prayer.

‘*Thursday, 12th.*—This day is the twelfth anniversary of my ordination. I hope I have felt grateful for having obtained help of God to continue until this day. It is difficult to say whether, on a review of the last twelve years, shame for myself, or gratitude to God, should preponderate. May the Lord make me to feel both as I ought; and may He in future (if He lengthens my days) give me less cause for the former, and to be more sensible of the latter! Oh that He would enable me to “take heed to myself,” to my “doctrine,” and to perform every part of my work with more zeal and diligence, fidelity and success! In the forenoon I endeavoured to read with care Paul’s Epistles to Timothy and Titus, after which I made preparation for preaching. *Afternoon.*—Rode to Mindrum Mill; preached, and baptized a daughter of Thomas Dunn. In the evening I examined the children of the Cornhill Sabbath school, and preached.

‘*Friday, 13th.*—Wrote a report of our Tuesday meeting for the newspapers, and prepared for preaching at Kelso to-morrow.

‘*Saturday, 14th.*—Preached at Kelso, and heard a very useful sermon from Mr. Young. *Sabbath.*—A most excellent action-sermon from Mr. Hall. I served three tables, and heard Mr. Young in the evening. *Monday.*—Preached, and heard Mr. Y. *Tuesday.*—Waited in Kelso to dine along with

Mr. Hall and Mr. Young at the Rev. Mr. Lundie's. Returned about ten o'clock with the Rev. Mr. Laurie of Tweedmouth, who remained all night with us . . . *Thursday, 19th.*—Went to Stichel to the baptism of Mr. M'Lay's son, William. Mr. Hall preached and baptized. . . .

' *Tuesday, 24th.*—Wrote a considerable part of the charge intended to be delivered for Yetholm ordination. Read in the evening the various services connected with the ordination of Richard Winter Hamilton (in my brother's old chapel, now possessed by the English Congregationalists). . . .

' *Thursday, 26th.*—Read a number of ordination charges, to compare them with what I had, without any previous reading on the subject, written. Glad to find that I had omitted nothing of consequence commonly adverted to. Had a call from Mr. Elliot. In the evening I went to Wark, examined the Sabbath scholars, and preached. . . .

' *Tuesday, 31st.*—Rose between five and six o'clock. Finished the charge. In reading Dr. Watts' *Rules of Conduct*, I was surprised to find that he has a charge to a young minister, founded on the very same words which I have chosen (1 Tim. iv. 16), and that he has taken the very same method, and, what is still more remarkable, that he expresses his first three general divisions in the very same words.

' *Wednesday, 1st April.*—Went to Yetholm to the ordination of Mr. Hume. Mr. M'Laren delivered the sermon (one hour and ten minutes in length), and I gave the charge to the young minister and his people, which occupied three-quarters of an hour. As the day was cold, and the services in the open air, the concluding sermon to the people, which Mr. Lee had been appointed to give, was wisely dispensed with. Returned in the evening, and brought Mr. Elder and his daughter, along with Mr. Ure, to our house.

' *Thursday, 2d.*—Spent the day with Mr. Elder. Went with him to Birgham in the evening, and examined the scholars,

who are now nearly 70 in number, and all of them acquitted themselves well. Mr. Elder preached.

‘*Friday, 3d.*—Went to Berwick for Mr. Balmer. My principal object in making this exchange was to have an opportunity of hearing Mr. Grey, one of the Established ministers of Edinburgh, who was to assist at Tweedmouth.

‘*Saturday, 4th.*—Heard Mr. Grey preach a very elegant yet useful sermon from Jonah iv. 2. I suffered much, however, from toothache, and this marred my pleasure in listening. The pain increased during the evening, and I was obliged to go to bed without having made preparation for preaching next day. I had a more restless night than I almost ever knew from the endurance of bodily pain.

‘*Sabbath, 5th.*—Early in the morning I was in agony, and saw no prospect, if I attempted preaching at all, but to go into the pulpit and *extemporize* before a large and strange congregation. At six o’clock, however, suddenly and completely the toothache left me. I accordingly mandated without difficulty, and afterwards preached with more than ordinary ease and force. I baptized three children. In the evening, heard Mr. Grey from Acts iv. 20. The sermon, though not equal, I think, to the Saturday’s, was excellent.

‘*Monday, 6th.*—Heard Mr. Hunter of Swinton preach an able and eloquent discourse, and Mr. J—— of Berwick, a very poor one. Spent the afternoon with a number of ministers at Mr. Laurie’s. Heard Mr. Grey, in the evening, preach on behalf of the Edinburgh Missionary Society. The audience was large, and the collection £15. The sermon, in point of beauty and brilliancy, as well as in more substantial qualities, surpassed almost everything I had ever before heard. . . .

‘*Tuesday, 14th.*—The presbytery met here, and, besides much other business, Mr. Alexander Waugh (son of Dr. Waugh of London) finished his trials, and was licensed to preach. He and Mr. Balmer remained with us all night.

Wednesday, 15th.—After parting with Mr. B. and Mr. W. I went with Mr. Cox to take the list of members. Visited Mrs. M—— at her own request. I found her in great distress about her soul. She was admitted a member in June last, and soon sunk into a state of fear bordering on despair. Reading Vincent on “Judgment,” and other alarming books, had partly been the cause. She had at one time conceived herself to be guilty of the “unpardonable sin;” but she told me that, having heard me make some observations on that subject in one of the “examinations” in the session-house, she had ever since been relieved from vexatious thoughts about that sin. This struck me the more that I could recollect of no particular reason I had at the time for entering minutely into the subject, though I perfectly remember that I did discuss it. How often has the Lord directed ministers to speak to the cases of individuals without knowing it! This interesting young woman seemed much relieved by my visit, and I hope that, ere long, she will “go on her way rejoicing.” Blessed be God, that I occasionally hear of some good fruit from my very poor and imperfect labours. In the evening, I examined in the session-house on “the benefits which do in this life accompany or flow from justification,” etc.

Thursday, 16th.—Went to Dunse, and returned by Swinton, where I had engaged to dine with Mr. Hunter. Spent a very pleasant afternoon, and got home about ten o’clock.

Friday, 17th.—Had a call from Mr. M’Lay (who was going to Wooler), and from Mr. Elliot, who was on his way to Edinburgh. The coach from the south having been overturned between this and Wooler, Mr. Elliot did not get away before five o’clock. Read Dr. Chalmers’s sermon for the Hibernian Society. It is, certainly, liable to objections, but did not deserve the severe castigation which the *Christian Instructor* gives it.

'Sabbath, 19th.—Lectured in the forenoon, and preached in the afternoon and in the evening.

'Monday, 20th.—Visited at Grindon in the forenoon. Preached at Sandybank in the afternoon, and baptized Jane, daughter of A. Sanderson. Preached also at Wark in the evening, and baptized Elizabeth, daughter of J. Davidson. Felt that riding more than twenty miles, and preaching twice, besides visiting a number of families, rather fatigued me immediately after the Sabbath work.

'Tuesday, 21st. Forenoon.—Read *Leeds Mercury*, and the first chapter of Jonah in Hebrew. When beginning in the afternoon to write my lecture on Jonah, I received a letter from the Cornhill curate, complaining that I had married two of his parishioners without a certificate of the proclamation of banns. I wrote an answer; but, on reflection, thought it better to wait on Mr. Wood, the curate, and explain the circumstances. I had married the couple on the attestation of two persons who heard them proclaimed; and I adopted this method because I was told that Mr. Wood had refused the certificate. He and I, after some discussion, parted, mutually satisfied.

'Wednesday, 22d.—Went to Jedburgh to the trials before the Circuit Court. They were conducted with little dignity or impressiveness. I had the mortification to hear a man tried for forgery and fraud who had once been a member of my congregation, but whom we had excluded some years ago for bad conduct. Upon the first charge the verdict was "Not proven," though there could be little doubt of his guilt; and of the second charge he was convicted, and sentenced to be imprisoned six months, and then to be banished out of Scotland for seven years. A young lad, whose father is a member of my congregation, and who had himself attended the Birgham Sabbath school, was convicted of stealing twelve shillings from a neighbour's chest, and sentenced to be banished beyond seas

for seven years. This case affected me much. His conduct had formerly been good, and his sentence was allowed by all to be unreasonably severe.

'Friday, 24th.—Went to Mr. Dickson of Antonhill, to inquire about the method of applying for a pardon to the young lad. In the evening I began to make some preparation for preaching at Ford, but was interrupted by a Mr. M——, a preacher belonging to the Establishment, of whom I know nothing, but that he once before called in on an evening, and took the liberty—as he also did on this occasion—to lodge with me for the night.

'Saturday, 25th.—Set off in the forenoon for Ford, where I promised to go to introduce my young friend, Mr. Elliot, who had been ordained on the Tuesday preceding. I rode to Carfrae Mill without having stopped. There I dined, and having rested about two or three hours, I proceeded, and reached Ford about eight o'clock.

'Sabbath, 26th.—Preached in the forenoon on 1 Cor. i. 18. Heard Mr. Elliot in the afternoon deliver a most appropriate and impressive sermon—rich in thought and sentiment—on 1 Cor. ix. 16, last clause. I preached again in the evening from Deut. xxxiii. 25, last clause. Though the weather was very unfavourable, the attendance was good; and I would fondly hope that Mr. Elliot has got a very agreeable settlement, in which he will be long and eminently useful.' [This hope was amply realized. Mr. Elliot's pastorate at Ford was singularly happy, prosperous, and influential, and extended from 1818 to 1855, when he died, before his vigour was abated, and before there was any ebb to his success and satisfaction. The sphere of his labours was secluded; yet his brethren all along knew, and the laity of the denomination repeatedly discovered, that he had varied qualifications for adorning the most prominent church stations. He had been reared in Mr. Thomson's congregation, in which his father was long an esteemed

elder. Mr. Law, the biographer of Mr. Elliot, thus records : 'That he might the more speedily prepare for college, the young student—now about fifteen years of age—besides attending school, was accustomed to walk regularly to Coldstream—a distance of four miles—to read Latin and Greek with his minister, Mr. Thomson.' During Mr. Elliot's ministry, Ford was a delightful resting-place for Dr. Thomson when travelling between Coldstream and Edinburgh ; and there, in the beautiful manse, which always gave him a warm welcome, he passed many a night.]

'*Monday, 27th.*—Spent the day at Ford with my uncle's family and some of Mr. Elliot's friends.

'*Tuesday, 28th.*—Went with Mr. Elliot to comfort a family at Pathhead labouring under great distress. The parents were that day to bury the sixth child of whom they had been deprived by death, and the seventh—then their "all"—lay apparently dying. I spoke to them as one who had been a fellow-sufferer, and prayed with and for them. Mr. Elliot and I set off for Edinburgh.

'*Wednesday, 29th.*—This and the two following days were spent chiefly in attending Synod, at which there was no business of interest.

'*Friday, 1st May.*—Having come from Edinburgh to Dalkeith last night, I left for Coldstream this morning, and got home safely, to find my family in health.

'*Saturday, 2d.*—Made preparations for to-morrow.

'*Sabbath, 3d.*—Lectured in the forenoon, preached in the afternoon, and again in the evening. The interval between the lecture and the sermon began to-day, and I mean, during the season that it lasts, to "preface" the psalm which is sung at the opening of the forenoon worship.' [Mr. Thomson took special care in preparing for the exercise of 'prefacing' the psalm, and remembered that its chief end was to enable the congregation to sing God's praises with new intelligence and

fervour, and with a concord of blended sympathies. He touched briefly, comprehensively, and reverently upon the occasion and the theme of the psalm, and its varied transitions of thought and sentiment, as well as its grand Hebrew imagery, which the old Scottish rhymes had not quite destroyed ; whilst too many of his brethren gave, *extempore* (for men dared to extemporize in this exercise for half or three-quarters of an hour, who shrunk from attempting it for five minutes in their preaching), an exegetical or doctrinal lecture, that rambled and ‘doubled’ through all the phrases and clauses, and broke all the subtle links in the association of ideas, only to wander confusedly backwards and forwards, until the multitude of incoherent words darkened the meaning and concealed the poetry of the sacred piece, and proved as effectual in deadening the devotion of hearers. A *common*, or average, ‘preface’ was incomparably worse than one of the unmusical and drawling precentors of the period ; and the result was, that the exercise has been long universally discontinued. Yet a MODEL PREFACE would be a far nobler help to congregational praise than any choir or organ. But those who have a recollection of what ‘prefacing’ was generally—tediousness even being its least fault—will not soon propose its restoration.]

‘*Monday, 4th.*—Made some visits ; read part of Sir H. Moncrieff’s *Life of Dr. Erskine*, and attended the Sabbath school in the evening.

‘*Tuesday, 5th. Forenoon.*—Read more in Dr. E.’s *Life*. In the afternoon went to Leitholm, preached, and baptized Robert, son of Archibald Jeffrey.¹

‘*Wednesday, 6th. Forenoon.*—Visited at Brankstone. Dined at Palinsburn. In the afternoon preached at Etal, having

¹ Now the Rev. Dr. Robert Jeffrey, minister of a large United Presbyterian congregation in Glasgow, where also his elder brother, the Rev. Dr. George Jeffrey, has long been the pastor of another large congregation in connection with the same denomination: Their father was for many years

first visited all the families there, and baptized a son of W. Lyle.

‘*Thursday*.—Wrote my lecture for Sabbath, and in the afternoon went to Birgham, examined all the Sabbath scholars, then preached to the people, and baptized Ralph, son of George Allan. Read Dr. Erskine’s Life after coming home.

‘*Saturday, 9th*.—Went along with my wife and two eldest children to Berwick, to see William Honeyman sail for London. We cannot but take the deepest interest in his welfare. After being more than six years in our family, he went to Edinburgh College in October last; and though he went at once to the second, and not to the junior classes, he obtained high distinction. At Berwick we found that he could not sail, and that our journey was in vain. In coming home we were in great danger. The chaise-driver, in alighting, let the reins slip from his hands, and the horses rushed off and ran with the greatest fury. We were in painful suspense until the horses had gone more than a quarter of a mile at the full gallop, when my attempts to stop them by speaking—which was the only thing I could do—really succeeded. Lest they should set off again, I crept out at the window, and having with difficulty got at the reins, I held the horses until the driver came up. Had the carriage been overturned, the consequences, especially to my wife, might have been such that I cannot be sufficiently grateful to the God of our life for His interposition. This is the second instance, on the same road, of my remarkable preservation in danger.

‘*Sabbath, 10th*.—Lectured and preached in the afternoon

an elder in Dr. Thomson’s congregation. He was a man of rare vigour of intellect, who knew the Bible, and the theology, church-polity, and history of the Secession, as few knew them, and who could give graphic descriptions of all the notable preachers he had heard in the first half of the century. He had a ready and racy humour, which neither interfered nor appeared incongruous with his deep and uniform piety. He lived long enough to see his two sons in their present elevated posts in Glasgow.

and in the evening. After sermon, I finished the reading of Dr. Erskine's Life, and all the notes, appendices, etc. A tolerably good book, with many faults. All the information about Dr. Erskine might be contained in a few pages. The author thought it more dutiful or more important to give some account of the "Kirk," than of his friend; and here he greatly extols—sometimes at the expense of truth. He represents the *principles* as invariably a test of the *practices* of that church, and from her constitution and creed he defends her actual history. His treatment of the first Seceders is exceedingly harsh, contemptuous, and unjust. He, indeed, praises their successors, and proposes a plan for incorporating them with the Church, by receiving their congregations as chapels of ease. Yet, if his narrative be true, the Secession must have been all along most unreasonable, and the present Seceders must be wanton schismatics. Let such a comparative view as Sir Henry Moncrieff gives of the Church and the Secession be propounded to a Christian observer in BERWICKSHIRE, and he would be startled at its flagrant opposition to the truth.

'Monday, 11th.—Went with Mr. Cox to Sootyfield; preached and baptized. In the evening attended the school for religious instruction.

'Tuesday, 12th.—Went to Berwick, and saw Mr. W. Honeyman sail. This was the first time, since he came to Scotland, that he has gone to London without me, and I felt much affected at parting with him.

'Wednesday, 13th.—Read the *Edinburgh Star*, Chalmers' and Hall's sermons about the Princess, etc. . . .

'Tuesday, 19th.—Rose at 5 o'clock. Read before breakfast the first part of Witherspoon's treatise on "Regeneration." Forenoon.—Read the *Leeds Mercury*, etc. Dined early, and went to Twizel Stead to see Jane B——, who had been prayed for on Sabbath. She had got some relief, and was sitting in her chair. But as she and her brother Thomas had

not for long been able to be at public worship, and as several neighbours had come in to hear the prayer, I thought it proper to give them something like a sermon. Returned to Newtown, and visited all the families there and in Oxenridge that belong to the congregation. It was near 11 o'clock before I got home. . . .

' *Thursday, 21st.*—Rose at 5 o'clock. Read Witherspoon, etc. In the forenoon went to Wark, and examined on "The Offices of Christ." After dinner, went to Fireburn Mill. Returned to Wark in the evening, and examined the Sabbath scholars. I intended after this to preach as usual; but, finding that a considerable number of the members had absented themselves from the examination in the forenoon, I resolved to take them at unawares, when they came to hear sermon in the evening. I did so accordingly, and examined them on "the benefits which they that are effectually called partake of in this life." Got home after 10 o'clock. Read Mr. Grey's sermon, preached before the Edinburgh Missionary Society. It is the one I heard him deliver at Berwick. It appeared to much more advantage when aided by his very graceful delivery. . . .

' *Wednesday, 27th.*—Rose at 6 o'clock, and read Witherspoon's letter to M. Henry, and his masterly essay on justification. In the forenoon heard that James Davidson, Wark, died this morning at Ford, from an accident he met with yesterday. He leaves a widow and seven children, the youngest of whom I baptized last month. May the Lord be with them all! Went in the evening to Wark to see the new-made widow, but found that she had not returned from Ford, as the body was detained until the coroner from Alnwick appeared.

' *Thursday, 28th.*—Began to read the book of Deuteronomy, with Brown's Notes, etc. Went in the afternoon to Leitholm; preached and baptized Agnes, daughter of Simon Scott. Returned to Darnchester, where, after examining the Sabbath school, I preached.

' *Friday, 29th.*—Rose at 6 o'clock, and wrote lecture for

Sabbath. Went in the forenoon to attend the funeral of J. Davidson. It was a heart-rending scene. The children were weeping aloud ; the widow shed many tears, but seemed to be exercised in a more Christian manner than any I had ever before met with in such circumstances. "I have no *reflection*,"¹ she said to me ; "the Lord hath done it, blessed be the name of the Lord !" After returning, I went on with my lecture ; wrote to Mr. Young of Jedburgh, agreeing to be at his fast ; and then called upon my father, who is rather unwell. . . .

'*June 3d, Wednesday. Evening.*—Examined A. M——, with a view to the communion. I was under the painful necessity of rejecting him. When asked, "What Christ did to save us?" his reply was, "He offered up his son Isaac !" "Had Jesus Christ any son?" I asked ; and he answered "Yes." Some questions he answered tolerably ; but, on the whole, displayed deplorable ignorance. I gave him Thomson's Sacramental Catechism, and directed him to other good books, and then dismissed him, with deep sympathy and many serious exhortations. May the Lord render them effectual ! Read part of Baines' "History." . . .

'*Friday, 12th.*—The whole of this day was occupied in writing for the services of Sabbath. There was a severe thunderstorm, by which a man in New Learmouth was killed, and others were injured.

'*Saturday, 13th.*—Rose between 6 and 7 o'clock, and mandated part of my action-sermon ; heard Mr. Elliot lecture, and Mr. Davidson preach.

'*Sabbath, 14th.*—Rose in a good frame for engaging in my work, but was soon greatly agitated by Mrs. Turnbull's illness. She [his mother-in-law] was not expected to live when I went to the pulpit. Preached, fenced the tables, served two tables, and gave the directions. Mr. Davidson served two, and Mr.

¹ A *Scotch* mode of expression, meaning that she cast no blame upon any one.

Elliot three tables. Mr. Elliot preached in the evening. The crowd all the day was very great.

‘*Monday, 15th.*—Rose early. Upwards of 720 had communicated yesterday. If I mistake not, the number was greater in winter. Heard Mr. Elliot and Mr. Davidson preach. There never were so few *new* communicants in summer as on this occasion. The whole number was only twelve. Those who had got lines as leaving the district numbered about thirty, and we received the same number, or a little more, from other congregations.

‘*Tuesday, 16th.*—The presbytery met, and owing to some business from London, about which it was necessary to send to Kelso at a late hour, the meeting did not break up until five o’clock next morning.

Wednesday, 17th.—Some of the ministers did not leave before the evening. I afterwards wrote a short sketch of a sermon.

‘*Thursday, 18th.*—Went by Kelso to Jedburgh, and next day preached in the forenoon and afternoon. As the meeting-house is being rebuilt, the services were in the open air, and though the rain poured down in the afternoon, the people sat with much patience. Reached home about 11 o’clock. . . .

‘*Tuesday, 23d. Evening.*—Met with the Directors of the Bible Society. The penny-a-week subscribers in the town, exclusive of the annual subscriptions, had raised about £7 for one quarter. What the country subscribers will do, has not yet been ascertained.

‘*Wednesday, 24th.*—Rose at 6 o’clock, and read part of the *Characteristics*. In the forenoon attended the funeral of Patrick Brydone, Esq., who was well known as author of the *Tour through Sicily and Malta*. His infidel insinuations in that book are disgraceful. Yet he had many estimable qualities; and his family will long be remembered as having been the principal benefactors of the poor in this neighbourhood. In the afternoon attended the funeral of R. B——, a

member of my congregation, and an old residenter in this place. Went to Wark, preached, and baptized G. B——, son of the widow of J. B——. This was a painful service—the more so that there were several widows present, and at least two who had recently been deprived of their husbands in a very sudden and distressing way. In the evening, went to Skidlaw, and prayed with Betty M——, who has been in affliction for some months. . . .

‘*Friday, 26th.*—Received a letter from William Park, intimating that he was likely soon to be condemned to death, and requesting me in the most earnest manner to write to London in his favour. After making inquiry about him, I find that his character has always been deplorably bad, and that the robbery for which he is now to be tried at Guildford is by no means his only crime. I went to communicate the distressing intelligence to his parents, but did not get the opportunity. In the afternoon, read the *Instructor* for June, went to the field, and in the evening made preparations for Dunse sacrament. . . .

‘*1st July, Wednesday.*—Went to Kelso to make further inquiry about that unfortunate man, W. Park. Hearing that there was to be a meeting of the Kelso Bible Society in the evening, I remained to attend it. It was held in the parish church. Mr. Lundie began, and I concluded with prayer. A number of interesting extracts from the publications of the parent Society were read, and the meeting was addressed by Messrs. Lundie, Hall, Kell, and myself. The evening was very agreeably spent in the manse.

‘*Thursday, 2d.*—Came home to breakfast. A good part of the day was occupied in writing letters about Park’s case. . . .

‘*Tuesday, 7th.*—Went to Leitholm ; visited the members, and preached and baptized.

‘*Wednesday, 8th.*—Went to Horndean. Heard Mr. Renwick preach, and afterwards I preached.

'Thursday, 9th.—Went to Yetholm, and preached in the forenoon and afternoon. Returned by Howburn; preached and baptized. After so much riding and preaching, I found myself a good deal exhausted. . . .

'11th August, Tuesday.—Attended a meeting of the Directors of the Berwickshire Bible Society. There was much discussion as to the place in which the annual meeting should be held, in consequence of an Act of the General Assembly, forbidding all church ministers to meet in dissenting meeting-houses. Dr. Brown declared that neither he nor his brethren could attend, if, as agreed on at last general meeting, the annual meeting should be held in any dissenting place of worship. I and other dissenting ministers firmly, but temperately, remonstrated against this, and insisted that if we met in Dunse at all, it must be in one of the dissenting churches. All differences, however, were ended by a proposal of Mr. Buchan, which was agreed to, that we should meet in Mr. Hunter's church at Swinton. In the evening, visited at Dovecot Mains.

'Wednesday, 12th.—Went to Etal to see Adam Elliot's daughter, who, I fear, is fast going the way of all the earth. Dined at Mr. Dunn's; visited at Ford-Forge and at Mount Pleasant. Received a letter announcing that William Park is condemned to die; nor is there any hope of mercy being extended to him.

'Thursday, 13th.—Visited at Carham and Skidlaw. Dined with Mr. Smith, and then set off for Anton Hill, to inquire at Mr. Dickson if anything could be done in the case of poor Park. But Mr. D. was not to be found. Park's parents are in a deplorable state. I had to announce to them the result of his trial; and of all the distressing messages I have had to deliver, this was certainly the most dreadful.

'Friday, 14th. Forenoon.—Sir John Marjoribanks, who called to consult with me about Park's case, thought it almost hopeless. Yet it was agreed to try a petition to the Prince

Regent, and Sir John sat by me until I wrote it out. In the afternoon I called upon the most respectable inhabitants for their signatures to this petition, and then went to Lees with it. In the evening wrote a sketch of my sermon.

'Saturday, 15th. Forenoon.—I had again to call on Sir John, and to spend with him a great part of the forenoon. He engaged to send off the petition to-day, accompanied with a private letter from himself to Viscount Sidmouth. It is on this letter that I place my chief dependence. . . .

'Monday, 24th.—Received early from Sir John Marjoribanks a letter, enclosing an official answer to our petition for Park, and also a private letter to Sir John, from Lord Sidmouth. All hopes of royal mercy are cut off, and the poor prisoner will soon be ordered for execution. It is my constant prayer that divine mercy may be extended to his soul. Assisted John, in the forenoon, in taking down part of the fruit in our garden down the street. From the large golden munday tree about twenty-six *forpits* were got, and six from another of the same kind. Wrote to Mr. Jack of Dunbar. Wrote also a long letter to poor Park—a painful task.

'Wednesday, 26th.—Rode to Kelso, and dined in Mr. Hall's in company with Dr. Douglas, Mr. Elder, Mr. Robertson, etc. Returned at a late hour. Next day, Messrs. Elder, Kidston, and M'Lay came to dinner, and we spent a very pleasant day. Wrote to Sir John, who is at Harrowgate, enclosing Lord Sidmouth's letter, and also to Mr. Dickson. Began to read *Judges with Brown's Notes*.

'Monday, 31st.—Received a letter from W. Park, who expected to be executed this morning. It is of as satisfactory a nature as I have ever seen from a person in his awful situation. He had heard nothing of the hope which I had been led, by a letter from Kelso, to entertain of his obtaining a pardon. Nothing farther can be known until Thursday. The probability is that he will then be in eternity; and I pray that, in

this case, according to his own strong hope, he may be in heaven. In the afternoon, attended the funeral of a poor man who was found dead near this place yesterday. He is supposed by the medical men to have been murdered. But as he was known to be in a state of mental derangement, I am inclined to think that, if he suffered violence at all, it must have been self-inflicted. Went to my father's to tea.

'Wednesday, 2d September.—Received the last letter written by poor Park before his execution. It was addressed to his parents, but directed to be read to them by me. It is most penitential, and altogether very affecting. On opening it, I found a small portion of his hair to be given to his mother. As there is still some faint hope that he may be reprieved, I shall delay reading the letter to his parents until the issue be known.

'Thursday, 3d.—Have learned this morning that the unfortunate W. Park was executed on Monday last. Only few particulars are mentioned in the papers; but these in keeping with his penitence. *Evening.*—Went, at W. Park's desire, and read to the parents the farewell letter of their unfortunate son. Both they and I had more fortitude at this trying scene than could have been expected.

'Saturday, 5th.—My wife was this morning safely delivered of a son. May the Lord make me thankful for all his goodness. May He preserve and bless the mother and the child. May we and all our surviving children be in covenant with that God who has promised to be the God of His people and of their seed for ever.

'Sabbath, 6th.—Prefaced part of the 89th Psalm. Lectured, preached, and baptized Adam Thomson, son of Thomas Douglas [of the British Linen Company Bank, Coldstream], and of my sister Alison. Went in the afternoon to visit Park's parents. I had received good accounts of him in a letter, which I read to them, and which seemed to give them much comfort. Read a little of Buck's "Experience," etc. etc. . . .

‘*Saturday, 19th.*—Being in great want of a nurse for Mrs. T., and having heard of one at Pathhead, I went to Stichel this day, that after preaching there to-morrow I might go to Pathhead at night.

‘*Sabbath, 20th.*—Mr. M‘Lay, whom I was sorry to find unwell and in bed yesterday, was better this morning, and kindly set off to supply my place. I preached at Stichel, and afterwards started for Pathhead, where I arrived about eight o‘clock. Though disappointed in not getting the woman I expected as a nurse, I yet providentially got another, and I think a better. On *Tuesday* I went to Selkirk, where I was truly happy to find Dr. Lawson and his family well. On *Wednesday* I returned by Newtown and Stichel, and had great reason to be thankful for many kind providences on my journey, and for finding my dear wife and family in such circumstances of health and comfort.

‘*Friday, 25th. Forenoon.*—Wrote part of my sermon for Sabbath. Spent most of the afternoon with Mr. Nicol, who had come on a visit. When walking, we accidentally met with Sir John Marjoribanks, who asked me to take a walk with him. Speaking of a projected plan for having *a course for annual races* near Coldstream, he observed that I would think it no improvement. I told him that I thought it would be quite the reverse—by leading to much dissipation, etc. He himself considered it very strange that the PARISH MINISTER should give it any countenance; and it is truly wonderful that Mr. Scott, after refusing to give anything but his strongest opposition and most virulent abuse to the Bible Society, and after maintaining that subscribing to this Society was a shameful robbery of the poor, should yet have expressed his willingness not only to sanction, but by a liberal subscription every year to support, the barbarous and demoralizing amusement of horse-racing within his own parish! Sir John manifested but little respect for the reverend patron of horse-racing. . . .

‘*Sabbath, 27th.*—Prefaced psalm, lectured, and baptized the son of John Wilson. Preached in the afternoon; and Mr. M‘Lay, after having preached at home, arrived before my sermon was ended, and baptized my son, George Lawson Thomson.

‘*Monday, 28th.*—Spent part of the day with Mr. M‘Lay. Prayed with Mrs. R. and Margaret H. I found the latter, as I always had, full of gratitude and contentment. She believed, she said, that no one had been so mercifully dealt with as she had been. On inquiring particularly into her circumstances, however, I found that she had never in her life been so near want as now—being, in fact, reduced to her very last halfpenny. I gave her half-a-crown; and both she and I wondered at the Providence that had sent me there that night, especially as I had purposed to see her long before—yet was led, unawares, to defer my visit until the moment of her extremity.

‘*Tuesday, 29th.*—Went to Flodden, preached and baptized. Returned by Palinsburn, where I expected to see Mrs. Cumming in her usual health, but found that she had, about an hour before my arrival, expired in an apoplectic fit. I remained some time with the afflicted family. Took tea at New Heaton. Met in the evening with the Directors of the Bible Society. Hitherto our funds are increasing. . . .

‘*7th October, Wednesday.*—Wrote in reply to a letter from Newcastle, requesting me to attend the annual meeting of the Missionary Society on the 9th November, and to preach two or three sermons on the Sabbath preceding, I was very sorry that, as that is the day fixed for our communion, I could not comply. Examined James P——, who had a first child to be baptized. He has been a member of this congregation for nearly fifty years, but must have managed to escape all the formal and informal examinations that would have tested his knowledge, for he now displayed such gross ignorance that I could not promise to baptize his child. In answer to questions, he said that “Christ died a natural death,”

that He “died in His bed,” that “men never did Him any harm,” that “He was not put to death by men,” that “the Son of God buried Him,” that “He continued on earth for six days after His resurrection,” that “He was never a child, but was man from all eternity.” I did not dare to put more questions, lest I should bring out more of his astounding and most lamentable ignorance. He never yet could say what death Christ died, nor who betrayed Him.

‘*Friday, 9th.*—Went to Dunbar to assist at the communion. Mr. Hay and I preached on Saturday. On Sabbath heard a very good action-sermon from Mr. Jack. I served three tables, and preached in the evening. On Monday Mr. Hay preached, and I followed. On Tuesday went to Edinburgh on the coach, to meet with Mr. Elliot, as I had engaged to assist him in selecting the furniture he should buy. Returned to Dunbar on Wednesday evening; and, on horseback, went home next day.

‘*Sabbath, 18th.*—Lectured, preached, and had two baptisms. Went to Horndean in the afternoon; preached, and baptized James, son of the Rev. W. Lee. Returned in the evening. . . .

‘*Friday, 23d.*—In the forenoon finished my lecture; in the afternoon wrote part of my evening sermon; in the evening examined five young persons for the communion. One of these I was constrained to censure for his inattention to serious things, and to require that he should come back to me again. I gave him Brown’s Catechism, and, with earnestness and affection, besought him to be diligent in perusing it. James P—— came again to be examined, to get his child baptized. He had before been examined by Mr. Elder as well as myself, and neither of us thought it proper to baptize his child. We had both exhorted him to be zealous in seeking knowledge; but I found him no better this night. When I asked, “Where did God place Adam after his creation?” he replied, “At His own right hand.” “Did Adam break the Covenant?” “No.” “Did he eat of the forbidden fruit?” “No.” “How long

did Christ continue in the grave?" "Forty nights." Finished the skeleton of my discourse at a late hour.

'*Sabbath, 25th.*—Lectured and preached. After the close of the evening service, I went and baptized the son of James P——. On account of the father's deplorable ignorance, the *mother* presented the child, and came under the solemn engagements.

'*Tuesday, 27th.*—Went to Kelso, and attended the meeting of the Synod of Merse and Teviotdale (of the Establishment). Heard from my uncle, Mr. M'Lean, who was the retiring moderator, a good sermon. In respect both of matter and of manner, the preacher far exceeded my expectations.

'*Tuesday, 10th November.*—Spent the forenoon with Mr. Hall of Kelso and Mr. M'Lay of Stichel, who remained to dine with us. Robert Watson, a member of session, died this day after a short illness. He was a good man, and feared God above many. Next day I spent the afternoon and evening with Messrs. Thomas and John Fair, who had written to say that they would then dine with us.

'*Saturday, 21st. Forenoon.*—Finished my lecture and the skeleton discourses. In the afternoon, when reading the newspapers, I was sent for to see Mrs. Gourlay. I had found her yesterday in rather a clouded state of mind. To-day she seemed not much, if at all, worse as to her body; but all her fears of mind had vanished, and she was rejoicing in the Lord greatly. After speaking with much pleasure of the divine promises—particularly those in the 14th chapter of John,—she desired me to watch over her daughter and only child, and always to give her my best advice. She then requested that I would write to her brother when she departed. I wondered at all this, for there seemed no reason to apprehend any speedy change, and she said herself that she was not worse than yesterday. Speaking of my writing to her brother, and referring to her happy state of mind, she observed that it would be "a

great comfort to him ;” and then she added, in a firm tone, “ My hope is strong in the Lord.” She had scarcely uttered the words, when, to my amazement, her eyes glanced upwards, and, after a deep sigh or two, she expired ! In the evening, after writing to Mr. Porter, as I had promised to his sister, I endeavoured to make some further preparations for Sabbath ; but I felt my mind distracted and confused. Mrs. Gourlay has left few in the congregation equal to her in piety, and almost none to be compared with her for her bounty to the poor, and her forwardness and liberality in every good work. Death has of late deprived us of many of our best members. May the Lord raise up others in their stead ! . . .

‘ *Wednesday, 25th.*—Went to Kelso to see Mr. Hall. Returned by Birgham, where I examined the young people and preached. Read Dr. Jamieson’s sermon on the death of the Princess. It will not add much to his reputation. Next day wrote my skeleton sermon for Sabbath evening. Went to New Learmonth in the afternoon ; preached and baptized. Came home by Cornhill, where also I preached.

‘ *Friday, 27th.*—Received a letter from Sunderland, requiring me to set off for that place next week. I at first thought of going to Kelso to consult with Mr. Hall, but afterwards satisfied myself with writing to him by a sure hand. . . .

‘ *Wednesday, 2d December.*—Made some arrangements for leaving home. Went in the afternoon to pray with John Air. Had Mr. Douglas and his brother to tea. Attended a meeting in the evening about *lighting the town with gas.*’ [Mr. Thomson started and vigorously pushed on this movement until it was successful ; and Coldstream was lighted with gas long before any of the towns that were twenty times its size]. ‘ Was sent for again to see Mr. Air. I prayed with him. Soon after I had left he expired.

‘ *Friday, 4th.*—Set off for Newcastle by coach about two o’clock, and arrived at half-past ten. Next day called on Mr.

Smith and several friends, and came to Sunderland in the evening. *Sabbath, 6th.*—Heard Mr. Mason lecture in the forenoon. I preached in the afternoon and in the evening.' [For three or four weeks he remained in Sunderland, his clerical brethren taking full advantage of his readiness to preach, for almost daily he preached once, if not twice.]

'*Friday, 25th.*—Mr. Givens' family and friends, to the number of about sixteen, were engaged to dine this day at his house. The meeting took place partly because it was a holiday, and partly to show respect for me, as his guest, before leaving Sunderland. We sat down to dinner, all in good spirits, and continued for about half an hour after dinner to maintain a very lively and pleasant strain of social talk, when Mr. Wilson, one of Mr. Givens' sons-in-law, proposed that several of the company should join him in taking a ride. None were then inclined for this exercise, yet he left us to take a ride by himself. His own pony was in the stable-yard; but at the moment when he entered the court, Mr. Givens' horse, which had been from home, came in. He proposed to mount this animal; and though the servant strongly assured him that it would be at the greatest risk, he persisted, and in a minute or two he rushed past the house, where we all were, in full flight, the horse having at once run away. Mr. Wilson was soon thrown to the ground, and his skull so severely fractured, that he died in less than three hours. He has left a pregnant widow of only twenty-two years of age, and two very young children. May God be her Husband and their Father! As I had to communicate to the widow the startling intelligence, and to be with her in the midst of her grief, it was a distressing task, and excited such deep and painful sympathy as I have, perhaps, never before felt in the case of any not related to myself by the tenderest ties.

'*Saturday, 26th.*—This day was spent in comforting the mourners. In the evening, I had to take Mrs. Wilson home

in a carriage. It was after eleven o'clock before I could look at my notes.

'Sabbath, 27th.—Heard Mr. Mason lecture, and I preached in the afternoon and evening. In both discourses I alluded to Mr. Wilson's sudden death ; and the prayers and preaching produced apparently a more solemn impression than I have witnessed since I preached the first time after the death of my dear and much lamented brother.

'Monday, 28th.—Spent in making calls. I attended poor Mr. Wilson's funeral. Next day, after taking leave of my good friends at Sunderland, I took the coach to Newcastle, where I spent the evening with Mr. Robinson's family. On Wednesday I reached Coldstream, and found wife and children well. But for the unexpected death of Mr. W., I had never enjoyed more pleasure when away from home, than when supplying at Sunderland. The people seemed to like and to be profited by my services ; and I had been the means of partly reconciling a minister and his session, and of doing good, I hope, in different ways.

'Thursday, 31st.—(Last day of the year.) Mr. Williamson called, on his way from the west country, and remained to dinner. The fatigue of my journey kept me from doing almost anything after Mr. W. left. I attended the fellowship meeting in the evening.

'1819, January 1st, Friday.—Having through divine mercy been spared to see the commencement of another year, this morning has, I hope, been spent in a way somewhat suitable to the season. In the forenoon wrote part of my lecture, and in the afternoon went to Wark Common to see poor J. D. He is in the prime of life, and the father of nine children, most of whom are very young. He has always been distinguished for his industry ; but having taken a bad farm at too high a rent, he fell behind with his rent. A seizure of all his goods lately ensued, and the effect on his mind

is lamentable. He is raging mad. He, however, knew me at once, and sometimes conversed with tolerable coherence. I proposed praying with him ; to this he readily assented, and during the exercise behaved with propriety. Afterwards visited Mr. Cumming, who is very ill, in consequence of a fall from his horse. In the evening finished the writing of my lecture. . . .

' Tuesday, 12th.—When Mr. Hume (Yetholm) was preparing to go off this forenoon, we heard that a boy had fallen into the Water of Leet and been drowned. We went to the house of his parents, and assisted the surgeons in using the means for restoring suspended animation. These means were persevered in for upwards of two hours ; but, though the boy had not been many minutes in the water, all proved vain. While the operations were going on, I took the parents aside for a little and prayed with them. In the evening went again to comfort the bereaved parents and to pray with them. Learning that they were very poor, I sent them five shillings. Began at home to give lessons in the History of England. Wrote a long letter to Dr. Waugh, respecting George Douglas, who wishes to go as a missionary to Africa.

' February 6th, Sabbath.—(At Dr. Hall's sacrament.) Heard an excellent and eloquent sermon from Dr. Hall. I served four tables ; Mr. Euston from Montreal, and a minister from Ireland, served one each. I preached in the evening.

' March 1st, Monday.—Went to Stichel. Heard Mr. M'Laren and Mr. Henderson. In coming home, the pony, which I had borrowed from Mr. Murray, fell with me ; but though it fell with great violence, yet, through mercy, I received no serious injury.

' Wednesday, 10th.—Preached twice at Kelso at Mr. Hall's fast. On Monday, went to Kelso, and heard Mr. Hume and Mr. Young. Remained at Mr. Hall's all night.

' Thursday, 25th.—Went by coach to Sunderland to preach for two Sabbaths.

'13th April, Tuesday.—Dined at Houtel, on the occasion of James Mills being bound an apprentice to my brother-in-law. As the day was very wet, Mr. Turnbull, Mr. Craig, and I took a chaise. On our return, the night was pitch dark, and the chaise was overturned. There was much cause for gratitude that none of us suffered any harm.

'Monday, 26th.—Set off for Edinburgh, to attend the meeting of Synod. Remained at Ford all night, and got to Edinburgh on Tuesday. The business before the Synod was exceedingly interesting. Nearly a hundred petitions were presented, praying that steps might be taken to expedite the desired union between the two great seceding bodies. The assembly was of one heart, and expressed itself in prayer and thanksgiving. . . .

'June 9th, Wednesday.—Sent off to the press my sermon on Acts viii. 39. Thursday.—Fast day. Mr. Hume preached. On Friday, Dr. Hall arrived from Edinburgh; and on Saturday, he preached once, and Mr. Davidson twice.

'Sabbath, 13th.—Preached the action-sermon. There were six tables. There were 750 communicants. Dr. Hall preached in the evening; and he and Mr. Davidson again on Monday.

'Tuesday, 15th.—The presbytery met. Messrs. Inglis and Waugh passed part of their trials for ordination.

'Wednesday, 16th.—Dined with Mr. Leitch at Hirsell. Came home soon after dinner, and married James Thomson, my cousin, to Agnes Thomson, my sister. May the Lord greatly bless them both!' [This sister had a very superior understanding and a remarkable memory, yet these had not rendered her less amiable and affectionate. Her husband, who still—in 1868—survives, has been known in many circles for his genial bearing, and for an inexhaustible store of original and racy humour.]

'Monday, 21st.—Sailed from Berwick for London in the "Wellington," Captain Brown.'

The following are a few Notes for the early months of 1821:—

‘*Monday, 1st.*—Have, through the tender mercy and long-suffering of the God of my life, been preserved to enter upon the first day of another year. In the morning I left for Berwick, to meet with brethren who had formed themselves into a society for reading essays, and for discussing questions on important subjects in theology. I was too late for the essay which Mr. Lee read, on the deep subject, “The Sonship of Christ;” but I was in time for a discussion on the question which had been fixed—viz. “The extent of the atonement.” The difficulties and apparent contradictions attaching to each of the various theories were brought forward, examined, and balanced against each other; and the various passages of Scripture on the subject were candidly looked into and interpreted. I was greatly pleased with the manner in which this part of the business was conducted; and, convinced of the eminent usefulness of such conferences, I gladly joined the society.

‘*Tuesday, 2d.*—Spent the greater part of the day with the brethren and other friends at Berwick. Went to Ayton, and passed a very agreeable evening with Mr. and Mrs. Ure.

‘*Wednesday, 3d.*—The session of Mr. Ure’s congregation had appointed this as a day of thanksgiving for the union happily effected in September last, between the two branches of the Secession. I preached from the text, “They shall be one in my hand.”

‘*Friday, 5th.*—After studying my lecture in the forenoon part of the day, I was engaged in the afternoon with the parish minister, at the house of Mrs. Fair, in fixing on the most proper persons for sharing in the benefaction of her son, Mr. Thomas Fair of Buenos Ayres, who had sent £20 for buying meal to be divided among the poor of the town. This excellent young man makes a good use of his great wealth. He has repeatedly

sent donations of this kind to his native place, and to Kelso.' [For about 46 years subsequently Mr. Fair's benefactions were not only continued, but immensely increased and multiplied; and his descendants have inherited his liberality and generosity, as well as his wealth.] 'Attended a meeting of the gas company in the evening.

'*Tuesday, 9th.*—Attended a meeting held for the purpose of adopting measures for the protection of the dead in Lennel churchyard. The public mind has been deeply agitated on this subject, in consequence of two surgeons—one of them living so near as Swinton—having been apprehended for the crime of disturbing and plundering the grave.'

[This panic was repeatedly renewed all over Scotland; and in Coldstream it was felt strongly, and not without good reason. Lennel churchyard was at a very considerable distance from any dwelling. The 'long sleepers' were, by day and by night, far separated from the living; and the solitary spot near the Tweed must have been specially inviting to 'resurrectionists.' The 'gig' which frightened or provoked so many villages, might have stood for hours at the gate of the lonely Lennel burying-ground without being seen by a single passer-by, to excite his suspicion, and there were most convenient roads, along which it could have been driven in all directions without being interrupted or challenged. That churchyard stood at a distance which was 'sanitary' for the living, but was most unsafe for the dead, of whom, in their peculiar situation, it could no longer be said, '*There* the wicked cease from troubling them, and *there* the weary are at rest!' A watch-house was built, a night-sentry appointed, and 'mort-safes' for new graves provided—the last being a security which was but seldom tried elsewhere. All the inhabitants joined eagerly in supporting those measures for protecting the sanctity of the grave; and the poorest ungrudgingly paid their share of the expense.]

‘ *Wednesday, 10th.*—Went with Mr. Scott (parish minister) to solicit a subscription from Sir John Marjoribanks, for procuring *mort-safes* for the protection of those newly buried at Lennel. We were kindly received by Sir John, who promised £5. The remainder of the day was passed in waiting on the most respectable of the inhabitants for the same purpose.

‘ *Sabbath, 14th.*—This day had been appointed for the ordination of the elders-elect. Instead of lecturing I preached two short sermons on the duties of such office-bearers; after which Ralph Elliot, John Wood, Andrew Bennet, Alexander Weatherhead, John Waddle, and Andrew Purves, were ordained to the eldership. Preached in the evening, and afterwards visited and prayed with several sick persons in their own houses. Read the *Christian Instructor*.

‘ *Monday, 15th.*—Went with my wife to Skaithmuir, to the baptism of Mr. Turnbull’s child. I was much pleased with the manner in which my neighbour Mr. Scott performed this part of ministerial duty. It was late before we returned.

‘ *Tuesday, 16th.*—The presbytery met. Mr. Walter Scott delivered a lecture, and Mr. John M’Gilchrist a popular sermon; the former as part of trials for licence, and the latter for ordination’ [in Dunse. Mr. M’Gilchrist for many years, wherever he went in Berwickshire, drew as vast and eager crowds as ever attended Dr. Chalmers, though his attractive forces were of quite a different kind. On his removal to Edinburgh, he presided successfully over the large and influential congregation in Rose Street, and was greatly esteemed wherever he preached; yet his delivery had lost all its passion and impetuosity, and his magnificent voice, which had been like an organ for its grand music, was now without swell or cadence, slow as well as monotonous, though the matter of his discourses had become much richer, both intellectually and theologically. Had he been translated to Edinburgh only a year or two after his settlement at Dunse, before the fire

and energy of his early manhood had been tamed, he would have taken a place little, if at all, inferior to Struthers.] ‘The meeting of presbytery was a very agreeable one. The ministers came to tea; and Messrs. Inglis and Young remained all night.

‘*Wednesday, 17th.*—The forenoon was spent in going to solicit subscriptions from Lord Hume, Mr. Waite, etc. etc., for mort-safes. Went in the afternoon to Leitholm, and preached.

‘*Thursday, 18th.*—Read Brown, Calvin, and several odes of Horace. Was afterwards engaged in procuring more subscriptions for the mort-safes, and attended a committee in the evening.

‘*Friday, 19th.*—Went to Kelso to see Mr. Hall, of whose health I this morning happened to hear an unfavourable account. I was happy to find him in the way of recovery. Returned between nine and ten o’clock. Wrote to Mr. Baines of Leeds.

‘*Sabbath, 21st.*—Preached at Dunse, and returned in time to hear Mr. M’Gilchrist.

‘*Monday, 22d.*—Rode to Carfrae, and then to Ford, where I spent the evening with Mr. Elliot. Next day rode to Edinburgh, where I spent the afternoon in purchasing books for the congregational library. Passed the evening most agreeably with my worthy old friend, Dr. Brown, who is now employed in conducting the studies of those young men who are preparing to go abroad as missionaries, by appointment of the Scottish Missionary Society. Was much pleased with the plan which the Doctor pursued in educating the students for their important labours. I returned next day by Portobello to Ford, where again I enjoyed the hospitality and conversation of my friend, Mr. E. On the following day rode to Carfrae to dinner, took tea with Mr. Inglis at Greenlaw, and returned in the evening to my own home, where I had the pleasure to find all my family well.

'Saturday, 10th February.—Preached twice at Ayton in Mr. Ure's meeting-house. On Sabbath heard a very good action-sermon from Mr. Ure. I served four tables, and preached in the evening. On Monday heard Mr. Thomson of Dunse in Mr. Stark's meeting-house, and I followed him. On Tuesday I dined at Chirnside in the house of Mr. Wood, along with Messrs. Thomson of Dunse, Young of Norham, and Stark of Ayton. Came home in the evening. Next day went to Wark, examined the Sabbath scholars, and preached in the evening.

'Wednesday, 21st.—Mr. Thomson of Belford called on his way to Edinburgh. I walked with him to Fireburn Mill, where we met Mr. Elliot of Ford, who came here with me and examined in the session-house in the evening.

'Friday, 23d.—Went with Mr. E. to Birgham, where I married a couple, and examined the young people of the Sabbath school. Mr. Elliot preached a very good sermon on the parable of the prodigal son. Next day I went to Belford for Mr. Elliot, who had engaged to preach there for Mr. Thomson. After preaching on Sabbath at Belford, I returned in the evening in time to hear Mr. Elliot.

'Monday, 26th.—Spent a great part of the day with Mr. E. Met in the evening with the committee about mort-safes. Went next day to examine a mort-safe made by Mr. Dunn, and afterwards paid a long visit to James Wilson, who had been anxiously expecting to see me. I found him quite sensible, and was glad to hear him converse both in an intelligent and pious manner. He expressed his desire that the Lord would greatly bless me and my family. He died very shortly after I left him. He was in the ninety-fifth year of his age. In the afternoon Mr. W. Scott called to consult about his brother Robert. He remained to the evening, when we went to my brother-in-law, Dr. Turnbull's, to supper, when Edward Gordon was bound apprentice to the profession of a surgeon. Both Ed-

ward's father and I wished him to be a minister of the gospel ; but this did not accord with his own views.

' *Wednesday, 28th.*—Mr. Elliot having returned from visiting some of his friends, he and I went in the afternoon to Leitholm, where he preached again, at my request, his impressive sermon on the prodigal son.

' *Thursday, 1st March.*—Spent the forenoon with Mr. E. Went in the afternoon to the funeral of James Wilson. The mort-safe was for the first time put into his grave. Examined in the session-house in the evening ; but the weather was stormy, and but few attended. Finished in my study the reading of Baxter's *Gildas Silvanus, a Reformed Pastor*—an admirable book. May God give me grace to follow its directions, and to feel the influence of the powerful motives by which they are enforced !

' *Saturday, 18th.*—Wrote part of sermon on Hos. i. 10, intended to be preached occasionally in the course of my tour through England on behalf of the Scottish Missionary Society. In the afternoon Mr. Givens and Mrs. Wilson from Sunderland paid us a very unexpected visit. This put it out of my power to go on with my sermon, and rendered it necessary for me to change my subject. *Sabbath, 11th.*—Lectured, preached twice, and baptized two children, and rebuked one offender.

' *Monday, 12th.*—Went to Kelso with Mr. Gunn. Heard Mr. Cranston and Mr. Young, and spent the remainder of the day with Mr. Hall and his friends. Next day the presbytery met, when Mr. M'Gilchrist finished his trials for ordination. Went to Palinsburn, examined the members, preached, and had a case of baptism. Finished my examination in the session-house.

' *Sabbath, 18th.*—Lectured and preached twice ; had four baptisms. In the afternoon of next day I set off for Hawick, on my way to England. As there is no public conveyance between this and Hawick, I took my own gig. The day was

bitterly cold, and I was very uncomfortable. Having supped at Hawick, I took a place in the mail for Carlisle, where I arrived next morning between five and six o'clock. On leaving the coach, I felt myself very unwell ; yet, after being in bed a few hours, I was quite refreshed and perfectly recovered ; and I hope I felt grateful to the God of my mercies. After breakfast I went out to take a view of Carlisle. It is indeed a beautiful little city. The cathedral and the court-houses are specially deserving of a stranger's attention ; the former being very ancient, and the latter new and beautiful. From Carlisle—by way of Penrith, Kendal, and Lancaster—to Preston, where I arrived early in the morning of Wednesday the 21st. After sleeping an hour or two, I took a walk through the principal streets, and admired the handsome buildings. The trade in cotton manufactures is considerable ; and the situation of the town is remarkably beautiful. In the evening of the next day I reached Chorley, where—according to appointment—I was to commence my labours in preaching for collections in aid of the Scottish Missionary Society. I was kindly received by the Rev. Mr. Thomas, in whose chapel I was to preach. He is indeed a very superior man. My audience was tolerable on a week-day evening, and the collection £5, 10s.

‘*Thursday, 22d.*—It was expected that I should have preached at Bolton in the evening of this day in the chapel of Mr. Fox. The people assembled ; but as I did not make my appearance, Mr. Fox himself preached, and collected £5, 0s. 0½d. for the Society. I was much grieved on learning the disappointment ; but my route had been so marked by the Secretary, as to make me suppose that I was to preach only in one chapel in Bolton, and that on Friday night. Supposing myself to be disengaged, I therefore went with Mr. Thomas to Preston, to hear a sermon from Dr. Raffles, of Liverpool, against *Purgatory*. Such a scene as at this sermon I never

witnessed. A mob, rather than a crowd, had collected in and around the chapel. It was some time before the Doctor could command sufficient silence for allowing him even to read his text; and during the progress of his discourse, constant muttering, often loud speaking, and sometimes bursts of laughter or of indignation prevailed. The subject did, indeed, admit largely of the application of ridicule and satire, and the Doctor obviously meant to spare none of his arrows; but the expression of his looks and gestures was frequently keener than his language. The serious, revolting, and even appalling aspects of the dogma and the practice were overlooked, and the audience seemed to be only convulsed with merriment, whilst the Papists were full of rage. Far rather would I have listened to one of his plain sermons, in which ideas far from novel are exhibited in sparkling rhetoric.

‘Friday, 23d.—I got to Bolton a little before the time for worship, and was confounded to hear of the disappointment referred to above. It was likely to prevent anything like a decent attendance in Mr. Jones’ chapel to-night. The audience, accordingly, was small, and the collection £5, 1s. 6d. Bolton is a large and fine town; but I viewed it with the less curiosity, though not with the less interest that I had supplied in the chapel—now belonging to the Independents, under Mr. Jones—for six weeks in the year 1807. It was in Bolton that I wrote the memoir of my very dear, and very much lamented brother. Here Mr. George Lawson was afterwards settled for some years, though he met with but small success; and he was translated to Kilmarnock. After preaching at Bolton, I the same evening took the mail for Wigan. This is a very considerable town. Having lodged all night at an inn, I next day met with a most cordial reception from the Rev. Mr. Steel. He is a very judicious and scholarly man, with a noble library, and his conversation showing the most extensive information. Here, as at Chorley,

I observed hand-bills throughout the streets, announcing that I was to preach and make collections for the Scottish Missionary Society.' [Mr. Thomson would not have entered this as a novelty in his view twenty years later, when he frequently saw his name on the walls of Scottish, as well as of English towns.]

'*Sabbath, 25th.*—Preached for Mr. Steel in the forenoon. Heard from him a very sensible and useful sermon in the afternoon. I preached in the evening; the collection £18, 7s. Next day I left Wigan for Liverpool, where I was waited for with anxiety, and treated with singular kindness, by the family of that excellent brother, Dr. John Stuart. I preached to his people in the evening. There was no collection, as Messrs. Heugh and Murray had recently been on the same errand. I spent three days at Liverpool, greatly delighted both with the place and with the people whom I met. Went to Warrington, where I preached in the chapel of Mr. Hay, and received £7, 8s. 6d. Mr. Hay is of Lady Huntingdon's connection, and seems to be a zealous and pious man. Preached next day in Mr. Sharp's chapel at St. Helen's, collecting £6, os. 6d. Mr. Sharp is an old man, and has been at St. Helen's for more than forty years,—an uncommonly long term in a country town for a Congregationalist minister to pass. The pastor among rural Independents is pre-eminently "a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth;" and he often knows Whitsunday and Martinmas as the "terms" of his own engagement and removal!'

In this English tour for the Scottish Missionary Society, Mr. Thomson had the honour of spending several days in the house of the famous Robert Hall of Leicester, and of listening to his bold and brilliant conversation. Scottish ministers of all denominations were enthusiastic admirers of Hall's too few but precious publications, and did not hesitate to

regard him as the greatest preacher of the age, in spite of national predilections for Chalmers. Whenever they were in England, they were eager to see and hear him both in public and in private ; for they knew that his matchless eloquence was not confined to the pulpit, but shone forth in full force, variety, and beauty in his every-day talk ; and the direct introduction which the fact that they were his professional brethren gave them, was ‘endorsed’ by the other fact that they came from Scotland—the country which had given him his university training, though perhaps his chief obligation to *Alma Mater* lay in the incident that she offered him Sir James Mackintosh as a close college companion for two or three years of his youth. Drs. Chalmers, M’Crie, Wardlaw, Innes, Heugh, Balmer, John Brown, Young, and Harper, had been admitted to the privilege of holding interviews with Hall ; and the first two, though more on a level with him, were welcomed with no more of frankness and cordiality than he bestowed on the humblest of his visitors from Scotland. Chalmers, when travelling in England, was freely introduced to all the grandees and notabilities in the social, the political, and the ecclesiastical world : he rolled in the carriages of proud patrons and patronesses between palace and palace in the provinces and in the metropolis ; so that when he was set down by a stage-coach driver at the door of ‘Parson Hall,’ it must have seemed a plain and Quakerish episode ; and the interview and its associations were likely to have a small and obscure place in Chalmers’s daily journal, though he felt the potent attractions of Hall’s genius. All the other Scottish ministers, however, reckoned it no ordinary event in their history that they had spent a day with Hall ; and they favoured their friends with minute reports—oral or written—of the great man’s appearance and bearing, and of the striking remarks which he poured forth with extreme rapidity and energy, and yet with perfect ease and a consummate felicity of precise and beautiful

language. None could listen without trying to act the part of Boswell, and preserve such utterances for the delectation of clerical groups. Those visitors, perhaps, failed to bring out Hall's powers in their natural play upon the most interesting topics. They kept asking him questions; their whole share in the conversation being a succession of interrogations, as if they were consulting an oracle. Still more unfortunately, the queries which they put were upon points that gave Hall no scope for originality of view, or for animated thinking. Did he prefer Demosthenes to Cicero in oratory? This was an invariable question, probably judged to be a delicate and happy compliment to Mr. Hall's pre-eminent eloquence, though the same end might have been gained by asking if he preferred Fox or Burke to Pitt, or Brougham to Canning; and the querist would have found that Mr. Hall was, on modern ground, far more original and striking, and that, in characterizing any of his celebrated contemporaries, he rose far above critical commonplace about Cicero and Demosthenes, and sketched living senators with surpassing vigour and fidelity, or by a few strokes of ludicrous exaggeration presented their leading features in the happiest caricature. He was also commonly pressed to pronounce between Homer and Virgil; yet Hall had written no poetry, to account for this point being in compliment referred to his judgment. He must have marvelled at what could have led very able, accomplished, and earnest Scottish ministers to keep those old questions, and others like them, seriously before their minds, and to bring them with grave ceremony to him for solution; still he politely entered upon a statement of his views, his mind darting off suddenly, whenever the least outlet occurred, into the fresher and more congenial range within which he could expatiate boldly as an original thinker, and have no longer, as a mere scholar, to plod along the narrow yet beaten tracks of criticism. It was a mistake to lead him into the discussion of such

old academical or debating-society questions ; but these did not detain him long from getting into contact with modern men, events, and interests, and with the 'form and pressure' of the passing age. Some of the Scottish ministers, after hearing him both in public and in private, decided that his conversation had higher and more brilliant qualities than his preaching. This may have been true occasionally, if not frequently : for even if Hall had enjoyed immunity from the physical torture and extreme prostration to which he was constantly liable, it could not have been reasonably expected that he should for forty years deliver two original and splendid discourses each Sabbath ; whilst it was not improbable that, in the course of every week, he, with his ardent intellect and keen temperament, in the presence of accomplished strangers starting a variety of interesting topics, might pour forth hours of brilliant talk. It is not required or expected of the noblest orators in the senate or at the bar, that they produce two grand orations every week, or every month : they are allowed intervals of 'nodding,' and moods of speaking like other men ; and a few great efforts of their aroused, concentrated, and strained powers will, in the course of a year, suffice to maintain their reputation, and to satisfy their admirers. And what critic, after hearing one of their common and unadorned speeches, and then listening to an eloquent and witty specimen of their 'table-talk,' would foolishly conclude that their gifts were for conversation rather than for oratory ? It would have been much more reasonable to expect Hall to be brilliant in talk for some time every day, than to exact from him a magnificent pulpit-appearance every Sabbath. It is, however, a fact, attested by ample evidence, that during all the years of his youth and early manhood, Hall's preaching was *invariably* splendid, as an intellectual, imaginative, and impassioned display, though, according to his own confession, it was sadly lacking in evangelical and useful qualities. It is greatly to be lamented that no specimens of

the bold and fiery preaching of his early years at Cambridge were preserved, and that his discourses on the attributes of Deity, which all his educated hearers—not a few of whom became members of the British Legislature—agreed in regarding as unrivalled for sublimity and impressiveness, have passed away with the voice that spoke them. Only a few from the very large mass of sermons delivered during his long ministry at Cambridge, Leicester, and Bristol, did Hall give to the press ; and those few, his hearers, amongst whom were competent judges, have declared to be by no means his best. But in this crowded department of literature, where shall we find any modern sermons equal to those published by Hall ? Attempts, indeed, have of late been made to represent Hall's thinking as superficial, and his oratory as tame ; but the matchless beauty and transparency of his style have led those critics to suppose that the ideas which are seen so clearly and so easily must be near the surface, though they lie many fathoms down ; and it is the very fulness—the ecstasy—of passion which produces the grand serenity mistaken for tameness. Noblest genius, when fully energized, inspired, and at work, is unfeverish and self-possessed. The highest oratory, as we have said elsewhere,¹ is best out of doors and under the open heavens : then it blends with the mighty yet tranquil harmonies of nature, and frenzied utterances are felt to be mean, grating, and discordant. Near the conclusion of Hall's sermon on the threatened invasion by Buonaparte, there is an inimitable display of overwhelming power and majestic grace. How calmly he fills the souls of his military hearers with every impulse of urgent patriotism, and pours into them the very excess of martial and heroic spirit—from the ranks of the living, and from ancient and modern battle-fields ! Truly says the poet :

‘ High brows are calm :

Great thoughts are still as stars, and truths like suns

¹ In *Hogg's Instructor*, in an article on CHALMERS, for 1847.

Stir not, though many systems tend around them.
Mind's step is still as death's, and all great things
Which cannot be controlled, whose end is good.'

Hall's taste was as delicate as his genius was bold, and the result is his all but perfect style.

Dr. Dick, long an esteemed professor of theology in the Secession, is said to have occasionally warned his students against admiring a well-known passage in Hall's sermon on the death of the Princess Charlotte, about 'the funeral obsequies of a lost soul.' The passage was quoted by the Tory and Church organ, the *Quarterly Review*, as equally grand in conception and in language ; but Dr. Dick treated it as tasteless and rather irreverent rhetoric, and sought to be satirical at the idea of 'undertaking' the funeral of a soul.

Mr. Thomson was introduced to Mr. Hall in letters from the Rev. E. Parsons of Leeds, and the Rev. Dr. Waugh of London. He was greatly struck by Hall's commanding appearance, for he had not expected a figure nearly so tall, erect, and largely built, and with no trace of pain or debility ; and the athletic figure harmonized with the massive face and its resolute and ardent features. Those who looked upon the living original, never noticed what in all his half-length portraits is unpleasantly prominent—the coarse, if not rather sensual, lower part of the face : this was lost in the imposing form, the noble brow, and the splendid eyes ; and the whole presence was stamped with dignity and power. Yet repeatedly, in the course of the interviews, Hall threw himself along two chairs or on the floor, in racking convulsions, from the spinal complaint which through life afflicted him. Even then his strong will, fortified by Christian resignation, would so overmaster his sufferings, as not only to repress every groan, but also to enable him to pursue his rapid and impassioned talk ; and not unfrequently pain seemed to draw from him his boldest and richest strains of eloquence.

It is matter for regret that Mr. Thomson left his notes of Hall's remarks, during the interviews which he held with him, unextended, as well as more or less disjointed. Yet he could certify that, in reporting Hall, he used none but Hall's own words. It is a pity, however, that he did not give a representation of the whole dialogue, including the circumstances, the associations, and his own words, which acted as 'cues' in starting Hall upon his different lines of eloquent remark. The notes were written as soon as the visitor had retired to his own room.

*Note appended to the Journal of his Mission Tour in
England.*

'I had the happiness of spending part of four days in the house of the celebrated Mr. Hall of Leicester; and for nearly the half of that time, except during the few hours we slept, I was almost constantly with him. I arrived at Leicester on Friday the 13th April 1821. This was quite contrary to my own wish. I had intended to preach at Derby on the evening of that day; but I got notice that it would not be convenient to receive me there for some weeks after that time. This, for the present, deranged all my plans; and I had to regret, not only that I could not get to Derby, but also that I was now obliged to remove a day sooner than would otherwise have been necessary from so interesting a place as Birmingham. But had my views on either of these matters been carried out, I should have missed one of the greatest intellectual treats I ever enjoyed in the whole course of my life, as then Mr. Hall would have left home very soon after, or more probably before, my arrival at his house.

'All the favourable accounts I had heard of this great man were far more than realized in my interviews with him at this time; and I found him frank, courteous, and hospitable in a

very high degree. His powers of conversation are truly astonishing; and when conversing on theological and literary subjects—which he does with singular animation of manner, and rapidity and precision of speech—he seems quite in his element. It is impossible to be with him for any time without being convinced that, beyond most even of learned men to be met with, he possesses an extensive acquaintance with general literature, and consequently with the best books on any interesting subject. Having perused both ancient and modern writers with great care, he can characterize many of them with remarkable felicity. From what I could gather from himself, I am persuaded that, with the exception of those few passages which have puzzled all critics, he can read the most difficult Greek and Latin authors with nearly as much ease as if they were written in English. “Indeed,” he said to me, “it would be a great shame to him if he could not, as they had long been his principal study.” In his library (which, after he went away, I had a good opportunity of examining) there is the best collection I have ever seen of the Greek classics. With the utmost readiness he points out the distinguishing beauties and merits of each. Cicero is his favourite Latin author, probably as much for his moral and mental speculations as for his harangues. Demosthenes he thinks the greater orator, and holds that his style, if properly adopted, would tell upon a modern audience. I was struck with the exact accordance between Hall’s view and that of David Hume, who says, in his *Essay on Eloquence*, “Could the manner of Demosthenes be copied, its success would be infallible over a modern assembly. ’Tis rapid harmony exactly adjusted to the sense. ’Tis vehement reasoning, without any appearance of art. ’Tis disdain, anger, boldness, freedom, involved in a continued stream of argument. And of all human productions, the orations of Demosthenes present to us the models which approach the nearest to perfection.” Mr. Hall’s descriptions

of the Prince of Orators were quite as bold and vivid, and they obviously grew out of his own impressions received whilst reading the original orations.' [The thoroughness and extent of Hall's classical scholarship have been denied by Churchmen-reviewers ; but the only proof which they have ever adduced is, that in his writings he very seldom quotes from the classics, and that, when he does quote, it is invariably from passages that have been a thousand times quoted by others, and that lie on the very highway of English literature. Hall censured and despised the practice of adorning an English composition with sentences or phrases from the classics ; and he did not regard that practice as either condoned by the novelty, or as aggravated by the commonness, of the quotations made. The selection of familiar passages, on the few occasions when he did quote, cannot be more absurdly accounted for than by supposing that Hall was a poor classical scholar. Who would allege that Sir Walter Scott's reason for often composing original lines as mottoes to the chapters of the *Waverley Novels* was his utter ignorance of British poetry, and his inability to select from this some appropriate stanzas ? Hall, after leaving the Aberdeen University, and entering upon the ministry, acted as classical tutor to the Baptist students in Bristol, and subsequently, for a large proportion of his life, he devoted himself to the study of the classics ; and with such a mind as his, could he, after all, remain but poorly accomplished in classical literature ? He might, as his *Quarterly Reviewer* admits, 'be too affluent to borrow ;' but his affluence was not associated with ignorance of what is contained in the darkest corners of the classical treasury.]

'Mr. Hall has likewise the works of the Christian fathers, Chrysostom, Augustine, Eusebius, etc. etc. With the contents of these huge books he is well acquainted, and can speak of the merits of their different treatises with discriminating exactness. He is well skilled in French literature, and has read

many books in that language. Dumont's publication of Jeremy Bentham's works, which he showed to me, he particularly admires. Indeed, he considers Bentham as by far the greatest man and the most profound philosopher of the present age, though he has no sympathy with Bentham's utilitarian foundation for morals. Mr. Hall casually mentioned that he [Mr. H.] had learned Italian when advanced in years ; and besides not a few books in that language, he has read Tasso twice over.

‘Moral science seems to be one of his favourite studies, and he is thoroughly conversant with the systems and writings of our Scotch philosophers. He has read Brown's Lectures with interest, and thinks him far superior to Stewart. He talks of Stewart's popularity as the most wonderful thing in the world, and maintains that he did not add anything whatever to Reid !’ [Hall's contempt for Dugald Stewart does not appear to have been in the least affected ; yet, though genuine, it was extremely absurd. He had received from several quarters the intelligence that Stewart was a free-thinker, who was satisfied with nothing but bare deism ; and too readily believing this, he allowed it to bias all his views of Stewart. His Scottish visitor could, and doubtless would, testify that he had detected no infidelity, and had been most powerfully impressed with eloquence, in the lectures of his old professor ; but Hall would go on from ‘strength to strength’ of exaggeration and paradox, becoming more vehement in his misdirected indignation and scorn.]

‘Of foreign divines, he regards Grotius as entitled to stand in the first rank. His book, *De Veritate Religionis Christianæ*, is, in his view, an admirable and even unrivalled production. Nothing of importance has been said on this subject since, that will not be found discussed or implied in Grotius. Grotius, he added, wrote in prison ; and this, considering his almost innumerable references to learned works, must be regarded as

a decisive proof of a great mind and an astonishing memory. Among English divines, his favourite author is Howe, from whom, he says, he has derived more advantage than from any other writer whatever. Campbell stands high in his estimation as a critic, though not as a theologian. His translation of the Gospels he declares to be the best he has seen. M'Knight he does not much admire in any view. Of Blair's sermons he has a very low opinion ; and of Alison's, as professing to deal with Christian doctrine, he can hardly speak with temper. The *Edinburgh Review* had stood sponsor for their theology, and devoutly wished that all sermons were like them. Jay's he considers as good sermons, but thinks he abounds too much in Scripture quotation. He particularly condemned the practice, so common with Jay, of using Scripture language by way of accommodation to express his own sentiments. This I had always admired as a great beauty in Jay, who, I thought, used it moderately, and not so as either to disguise or pervert the original and proper application of the words ; and I was therefore specially pleased when I heard Mr. Hall himself unwittingly in his family prayer employ a Scripture quotation with happy effect, in the very same way with the preacher whose practice in this he had a little before strongly censured. Mr. Hall had read the volume of sermons recently published by a few ministers connected with the late Associate Synod. He did not say a word to the disparagement of any of them, but seemed to have been particularly pleased with the first and the last. In the department of English literature he expatiated with remarkable force and animation, assigning their ranks to our different "classics" in the most masterly way. For Johnson he has reverence as well as admiration ; and for knowing him so thoroughly he feels grateful to Boswell, whose biography he regards as the most faithful and exact account which one man ever gave of another. It was just that the best biography in the language should fall to the lot of Johnson. Boswell

was proud at having been introduced to Johnson, and he has repaid the honour by introducing the whole world to the great man. Mr. Hall describes Hume as having, particularly in his History, carried English style to the pitch of perfection. Of Robertson he thinks less ; indeed, he prefers M'Crie to Robertson for style. There is, he says, more vigour in M'Crie's style, and it is more the style of a man of genius.' [This comparative estimate may be more than doubted ; for, whilst admitting that M'Crie had far fuller and more minute information on the times of which he wrote, and far nobler and more earnest views of the sacred cause which was then being battled about, than Dr. Robertson, yet in range and power of intellect, and in sweeping force and flowing beauty of style, the latter cannot be reckoned inferior. If Robertson had possessed the large and varied materials which Tytler had at command, he would have produced such a History of Scotland as could not have been rivalled, far less superseded.] 'Cook's History he thought dry and uninteresting, though concerning an era of rare excitement ; and for his part, he could not read the book through. Mr. Hall admires the genius but not the style of Chalmers ; and though he was at the moment in the mood for pointing out irregularities, extravagances, and excesses, yet there was not the slightest trace of jealousy or rivalry. There was no trying to make Chalmers less, that Hall might be or look greater. He said that all that deserved to be called argument in the *Astronomical Discourses* will be found in one short discussion of Fuller on Deism ; and he thinks that Chalmers did not treat Fuller well, in availing himself of his reasoning, without acknowledging the obligation, or even at all referring to his book. Of Chalmers' church politics he speaks with high displeasure ; and he greatly reprobated his conduct in attending anti-evangelical Churchmen when at Oxford, rather than evangelical Dissenters, lest, as the Doctor was said to acknowledge, he should give offence to the ecclesiastical dignitaries of that

place. Another ground of offence which he had against the Doctor was, that he refused to allow one of Mr. Hall's brethren to preach in his church at Glasgow. When I observed that Dr. Chalmers would probably himself regret that he was prevented by the laws of his church from opening his pulpit to a Dissenting minister, Mr. Hall replied, with some degree of warmth, though in perfect good humour with me, "But he did not give that reason for it, sir!" [Dr. Chalmers, when in England, had often preached in the pulpits of Congregationalist, Baptist, and Methodist clergymen, and uniformly treated these as not only his Christian, but his ministerial brethren, whose flocks, too, regularly received the same precious doctrine which he himself preached to all his hearers; whereas all the 'consecrated' places of the English Establishment were closed against him, the evangelical minority of the clergy *not daring* to ask or to allow the great Scottish orator to preach, and the High Church majority viewing him as a mere layman, who had no authority for preaching, and belonged to a 'Presbyterian rabble' that had no right to be called a church, and who, moreover, preached nothing but fanaticism. The readiness with which the Doctor preached in the pulpits of English Dissenters tempted some of these Dissenters, when visiting Scotland, to propose to reciprocate the kindness, and preach in the Doctor's pulpit; but they could not be permitted. A law of the General Assembly expressly forbade it, and the Doctor rather churlishly refrained from alluding to this interdict, and allowed them to suppose that it was through his own will and wish, and not the command of the church, that they were excluded from his pulpit. It looked as if he were so indifferent about what they might think either of him or of themselves, that he would not take the trouble to exonerate himself from the charge of discourtesy and unbrotherly conduct by pleading the enactment of his church. It is probable, however, that, from a filial sensitiveness for the reputation of that

church, he forbore to hint at his proper apology, and allowed English strangers to conclude that he was churlish and ungrateful, rather than that his church was narrow and exclusive. Mr. Hall's displeasure at the High Churchmanship of Chalmers seems to have kept him from expatiating, during this interview, on the many remarkable qualities of the great Scottish preacher.] ' Mr. Hall has some peculiar notions in divinity, particularly as to the consequences of Adam's sin, and the design and extent of Christ's death. He believes that all who die in infancy will be saved, and cannot admit that they are chargeable with the guilt of Adam's first sin, if by this guilt be meant liability to eternal punishment. He adverted to the strange opinion of Dr. Watts on this subject ; but thought it should hardly ever be mentioned, as being calculated to harrow up the feelings of affectionate parents. His own belief respecting the salvation of children was founded chiefly on *à priori* reasoning in connection with the texts of Scripture. He believes the doctrine of election, but says he would rather give it up than admit that Christ did not die for all men.

' He thinks that sermons, in ordinary cases, should exhibit great plainness and simplicity of style. When incidentally speaking of *alliteration*, he said it might be happily introduced both for ornament and effect ; and he adduced as an instance the account given by Pitt of Buonaparte, in a speech before the House of Commons, that " he was the child and the champion of revolution."

' Mr. Hall is well known to be a determined Whig, and he says " all men should be Whigs." His general principles, I have no doubt, are sound ; but when he comes to apply them, the opinions he expresses would require very considerable modification. He says of Pitt that it had been good if he had never been born, and that he was the greatest curse the country ever saw. He thinks that Brougham is not an honest politician, and that at present he is only attempting to

raise the price of his talents, and will ere long, he has no doubt, be in the Ministry.' [While these pages were passing through the press, the death of Lord Brougham, at the age of nearly *ninety*, has been announced. There was much in his notable and prolonged career to excite suspicions of his earnestness as a Liberal, and to justify, in some degree, Hall's unfavourable opinion; yet, with all his inconsistencies, he adhered nobly to several great causes, and his prodigious labours have been most beneficial to the country.] 'Mr. Hall has great and numerous peculiarities. He drinks tea to excess, and smokes incessantly. His smoking he assigned as one reason for not going to Scotland, because he supposed it would be quite annoying to the good people there. His aversion to letter-writing is remarkable. He even hates to receive letters from others, and he dreads the sight of a parcel. His letters, Mrs. Hall told me, will often lie unopened for days together. He thinks that great talents are no advantage to any man, and is sure that they do not add to the happiness of their possessor. His own talents, he said, if he had any, have made no addition to his. The little reputation he has acquired makes him uneasy when he preaches from home, because it, in his view, ensures disappointment. He wonders, above all things, at the ministers in Scotland writing their sermons and delivering them *memoriter*. There is no such thing, he says, in England. It must check animation, and produce a freezing effect. He himself never writes a sermon, except one to be published. He never did—not even at his outset. He began preaching when he was about fifteen or sixteen years of age. When telling me this, he added, "I preached best *then*, sir!" In the Scottish sense of the term, he is but a *preacher* (probationer) still; for, owing to a circumstance which he stated to me, he was never ordained. Before he had published his sermon on Infidelity, he said (but I think his memory must have failed him here) he had never written as much on any one subject, not his

college exercises and all put together. He sometimes has not had pen and ink in his house for three months at a time.

‘His sermon on the death of the Princess Charlotte was not printed as it was delivered. It cost him afterwards an immensity of trouble, night and day. For the second part, especially, he could find no train of thought. He used to write pieces of it and read them to Mrs. Hall; and then, in abhorrence of what he had written, he would cast them into the fire. To write six such sermons, he says, would kill him. He regrets that, at the early period of his ministry at Cambridge, he paid too much attention to composition, though he never wrote; and the reason alleged by him was, that he had then no deep impression of religion on his mind. But surely he is now a pre-eminently pious man.

‘I saw, in Mr. Hall’s library, a most beautiful copy of Kennicott’s Hebrew Bible in two large folio volumes, splendidly bound in russia. On opening the first volume I found the following inscription by the donor, of whom Mr. Hall says he never could find any trace :¹ “To the Reverend Robert Hall. These volumes are presented as an apposite intimation of that applause, veneration, and gratitude that are due to the acute detector, perspicuous impugner, and victorious antagonist of the sceptical, infidel, and antichristian sophists of modern times.” In the second volume I found the following words, written by the same hand, on a piece of paper attached to the inside of the board : “To make a present anonymously may require apology, certainly does explanation. The motive is to avoid all appearance of aiming at a reciprocity of obligations when the performance on the one part is of a nature to preclude requital on the other. 1800.”

‘I was greatly astonished to see on the blank leaf of one of

¹ Looking both at the gift and the peculiar style of the two inscriptions, we conjecture the unknown donor to have been the great scholar, Dr. Samuel Parr, who frequently eulogized Hall in public and private.

those volumes the following lines, which have an evident reference to the mental derangement with which Hall had been afflicted about the time of their composition :

“ Far above human flight, where glory shrouds
His shrine tremendous in impermeate clouds,
See HALL, unbidden, seek the eternal throne,
And claim the mansion soon to be his own.
Deep from the darkness starts the indignant flame,
Beats on his head, and flashes through his frame ;
Till, dazzled, blasted with immortal light,
The mortal cherub from the awful height
Falls headlong. There the humbled wand’rer lies,
Pride of the good, and wonder of the wise !
Now the sage, eagle-wing’d, to heaven’s gate soars ;
Now, meek in dust, the prostrate saint adores.

September 10, 1806.”

CHAPTER IV.

HIS PUBLICATIONS.

(1807-1850.)



IN Mr. Thomson's incessantly busy life there seemed to be no room for authorship ; yet, from the beginning to nearly the close of his ministerial career, he sought to increase his usefulness by availing himself of the power of the press. An author in the person of a rural Seceding minister was, at least on the Borders, a novelty.¹ His first publication

¹ It is a curious fact, that for a short period after the middle of the first half of this century, GREENLAW, the village-capital of Berwickshire, and its immediate neighbourhood, produced an unprecedentedly large number of young men who attended college and afterwards rose to distinction, generally in the clerical profession. Two of them became honoured professors of theology in the Free Church—Principal Fairbairn and Professor Smeaton ; another was the Rev. Dr. James Taylor of the United Presbyterian Church, Glasgow, known for his readiness, versatility, and skill in debate, and for his contributions in various departments of literature ; next there was the Rev. William Galbraith, a great mathematician ; and then there was a strong band of variously able and accomplished ministers who have not yet attained to university degrees—the Rev. Messrs. Parker (Sunderland), Riddel (late of Moffat—a man of eloquence and great acquirements), Anderson (Kirkden), M'Lean (Kirriemuir), Fraser (Gordon), and Haig of Norham. The native who rose transcendently above all his neighbours in power and brilliancy of intellect and culture was Mr. James Inglis, the eldest son of the Secession minister of the place. His originality of thought, and his many accomplishments, showed themselves not only in his writings, but in his conversation ; and few were the circles he entered which did not wish him to figure as the chief, if not the sole speaker. He and a younger brother have long been ministers across the Atlantic. We might have made the list longer and more imposing by adding the notables from Leitholm and Coldstream. The productive power in the little capital seems to have been exhausted.

was a small volume in memory of his brother, consisting of a biographical sketch, and four sermons on the distress occasioned by the death of dear friends, on the consolations which support bereaved Christians, and on the perfect happiness reserved for them in another world. These sermons he had delivered to the Leeds congregation when visiting them in 1807 ; and the hearers strongly urged him to consent to publish them. In such cases, excited and sympathetic hearers have often been flattering critics and unsafe advisers. They have tempted ministers, who should have been satisfied with the applause won from *hearers*, to challenge the commendation of *readers* ; and the result is loss of money as well as of reputation. It has been noticed, as a strange peculiarity in such circumstances, that not a few of those persons who were most clamorous for the publication of some sermon, neglect to buy a copy ! In the present case, however, the discourses possessed a sterling excellence for the eye as well as for the ear ; and though they were the productions of a young man, who wrote under the excitement of grief, both personal and congregational, they were free from extravagance and weakness, nor had they any trace of juvenile ornament.

It was a curious coincidence that, a few years later, a *Leeds congregation*, usually worshipping in the same *Albion chapel*, and probably including many who had been Mr. Thomson's hearers, did prevail upon another young minister to give to the press a sermon which had deeply moved them, and that this had a disastrous effect upon his literary reputation for many years. Mr. Richard Winter Hamilton, newly ordained to the ministry, had been chosen by a Mr. Blackburn, a Leeds attorney, lying under sentence of death for forgery, to act as his spiritual attendant. The duties he was thus called to discharge were of unusual difficulty for a youth of twenty : the convict had long been sceptical or indifferent about religion—free living having led to free-thinking. After the trial he confessed some,

but denied other of the charges, that had brought about his condemnation. Young Hamilton seems to have acted with remarkable skill and judgment, firmness and fidelity, tenderness and affection. Certainly he did not fall into the common error of seeking to encourage, in the criminal, presumptuous hopes of divine mercy. In all his dealings with the unhappy man in the cell and on the scaffold, he appears to have shown a wisdom, firmness, and kindness, which no experience could have given ; and had he stopped at the close of the tragedy, there would have been but little for himself to regret, or for others to ridicule. But after the execution he must 'improve' the event, and this he did in an 'unwritten sermon' before a vast and excited audience ; and worse still, being importuned to publish it, he wrote and 'sent it to the press'—as he says in the preface—'without any emendation but what arose from a transient reperusal of a page as it was written ;' and it swiftly passed through many editions, but was received by the critics with disgust, ridicule, and indignation, and by his clerical brethren with such compassionate shakings of the head as were more mortifying to him than contempt or abuse. For that maiden-sermon Hamilton suffered, in feeling and in fame, for many a year. His intellect—as is now acknowledged—was powerful, brilliant, and richly cultured ; but it was slow in reaching maturity, nor did he quickly obtain a command over it ; and his early efforts are like caricatures of his full manhood's grand performances. In the printed account of his ordination services (which, as he did with each of his subsequent publications, he sent to his Coldstream friend, who from the first recognised the presence of original powers, and warmly encouraged their development) there are Hamilton's replies to the plain questions which are generally put by Congregationalist ministers to a brother who is being admitted to the pastorate. The youth answered in a grotesquely elaborate style, which must have startled the company of senior ministers—

including both his own father and grandfather. To the query, 'Will you state the reasons that have directed your devotion to the ministry?' he replied, 'No sooner was I capable of the faintest thought and observation, than I aspired to the office as to something mysteriously dignified. But at that age, the ambition could merely arise from bold and fearless dispositions, or from counterpart motives equally criminal and vain. The predilection was probably strengthened from the celebrity of ancestors, and the reputation of friends, who gave attendance at the altar. But while memory lingers on these indications of character and presages of futurity, I sometimes fondly hope that the divine approbation originally prompted, as well as since expanded and matured them; though I wist not then it was the voice of God. My pious and judicious friends, however, rather discouraged than flattered the idea. When dissuaded from my choice, my volatile and susceptible feelings would glance at other professions; but none of these contained the elements which I desired, nor allowed those habits I was anxious to pursue. And, in short, the choice increased its intenseness and multiplied its action in the proportion with which it was opposed. But when I had any reason to believe that I had felt the energy of Christian truth—when its reflex power excited my sympathy with the condition of others—my difficulties vanished, and my vows were engaged to the ministry of Christ. *Having escaped the wreck, I could not but suspend the votive memorial in the temple of my Deliverer.* Having escaped the ruin of the fabric upon which the cardinal winds of heaven were loosened, I could not but hasten to my surviving fellow-creatures with the warning that, if they repented not, they must likewise perish. Happy shall I be if the issues of this solemnity shall prove that, amid the elections that present themselves to the youth, I have made that one by which I may most effectually promote the honour of God and the well-being of man. And when I see reason to suppose myself rash and

mistaken in the assumption of the office, I pledge myself, in the sight of God, and in the audience of this assembly, to relinquish it.'

The young minister had a flowing style, which he afterwards exchanged for a succession of very short sentences, that give the reader the sensation (as we have elsewhere said) of walking across stepping-stones, instead of along the continuity of a road ; yet he early manifested a surprising command of words, though these gradually improved in condensed vigour, subtle precision, and delicate beauty. Even to the last, however, in spite of his original thinking and sinewy and flexible style, he was occasionally pompous and bombastic—his genuine energy lost in a plethora of language. His unfortunate maiden-sermon was unquestionably, in style, the most eccentric and vicious of all his productions ; and the memory of it not only deterred him from soon reappearing as an author, but kept the public and critics for a far longer period from giving him a patient and unprejudiced attention. The following letters, written at much later dates, may here be introduced, though they lengthen the digression :—

*The Rev. R. W. Hamilton, to Rev. Dr. Adam Thomson,
Coldstream.*

'LEEDS, 6th April 1843.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—Unfortunately we have announced for next Thursday a meeting for the Religious Freedom Society. In this case I know not what to do, for you might be pledged to another place on the following day, which, being "Good Friday," would not have suited your purpose. We shall be most happy to see you, and obtain your help at this meeting. You might then advertise your purpose for the following week, and—a "wee bit sifflication of my ain"—preach for me on the Lord's day. I have to leave town early on that Friday, but return on the Saturday. Again must I leave on the Monday

for a few days ; but my house is your home to go in and out, and my family will be your attendants. You had better bring *your own snuff*; mine is four years old—a seasoning good for mutton and wine, not for this vile dust.

‘ I should not be indifferent to the honour at which you hint : it gives a certain status. To obtain it by your mediation would be no small ingredient in that honour. But whenever the dream has passed through my mind, or been raised in it by others, I have always resolved to do nothing towards it—to be no agent in the transaction—that it might be quite spontaneous on the part of the learned body, or as much so on the part of my recommending friends. You will now understand me in declining all conditions, even as to my few poor works, etc. ; only I am not of an *ungrateful* or *discourteous* disposition. I therefore give no opinion between the two universities you mention.

‘ Write and say how soon you come, etc. Pardon great haste.—Yours very truly,

‘ R. W. HAMILTON.’

From the same to the same.

‘ MY DEAR DOCTOR,—I am exceedingly grateful to you for your every kindness to me. You knew me—the boy. You saw my difficulties. I was successor to your brother ; I was of another community ; I pulled down his denominational work ; and yet you never instituted invidious comparisons, never evinced party-repining, but always seconded me. If you feel any interest in me, as once filling the place of your sainted kinsman, I value no less that relative bias than if it were all personal consideration. You know fully how I have felt as to university honours. When quite spontaneous—though that rarely is—when quite independent of the recipient, though recommended, I highly estimate. The lifting up of a little finger, a look, a breath, would destroy, in my idea, all their grace and worth. Glasgow sent me LL.D. It was *utterly* un-

expected. No one could be more surprised by a letter than I was by Professor Buchanan's announcement. I have learned since that Dr. Wardlaw was the urgent advocate—the more generous, inasmuch as Scotland never gave him any honour. About a month before, Dr. Halley intimated, in most oracular phrase, that something was in the wind, and from St. Andrews. I immediately guessed that you were at work; but I could verify nothing. I thought that I should soon hear one way or another—"dupe of to-morrow, even from a child." The thunder-clap came from Glasgow. Now, what is to be done? If I had *anything* to do with either, I might think St. Andrews slighted; but I have not in the most imaginable manner. I can therefore suggest nothing. If she still will present the D.D., I shall be most grateful. Perhaps no other man in England ever had a chance of both. But probably she will not proceed. I thank her for the good intention.

'I leave all with you. But if the fees be as high in St. Andrews as in Glasgow, I should feel it difficult to meet both at the same time. Act with your sound discretion; I know that you cannot act without your accustomed goodness. I am a little amused—perhaps flattered—at the dilemma in which *we all* are. I am sure we shall all get out with honour.—Yours, dear Thomson, ever faithfully and gratefully,

'R. W. HAMILTON.

'LEEDS, Feb. 28.'

Again :

'MY DEAR DOCTOR,—I am excessively mortified to find that my route is changed, and that I shall not be near you once. I was to have been at Jedburgh, etc., and now I am driven to St. Andrews. My long-meditated desire to see you is thus, after all, frustrated, and that when it seemed on the eve of fruition. I have only time to say, as to the other matter, that I rest at ease. Your kindness is not the less, if it be never

accomplished. Things are changed, and you are not responsible for the embarrassment. What those church extensionists have brought upon themselves! Widowhood, and loss of children.—Yours ever affectionately and gratefully,

‘R. W. HAMILTON.

‘DUNDEE, *June 18.*’

In the foregoing letters there is allusion to the efforts which Dr. Thomson of Coldstream was making to secure from the St. Andrews University a diploma for the brilliant merits of his friend Mr. Hamilton. In this Dr. Thomson was, if our memory does not mislead us, greatly assisted by the local representative of Secession, the Rev. Dr. James Taylor, who, in other cases of honouring English Dissenters, was equally ready to co-operate, and who is also understood to have done much to render his Synod familiar with D.D.’s. Persons observing how freely at present Scottish universities scatter abroad their honours, and allow to Dissenting ministers on both sides of the Tweed a considerable share, will scarcely believe that, a single generation ago, the action of *two of those universities* in rewarding the splendid theological and literary powers and achievements of Hamilton of Leeds, was generally viewed as marking the inauguration of a new and more generous policy towards the great men on the roll of Dissent, by uniting in an accumulation of titles. Yet so it was; and Hamilton was entitled to say that, before his case, no English Dissenter had a ‘chance of both honours;’ though subsequently not a few men, incomparably his inferiors, have in England and Scotland received the plurality, and a great many more, who were simply ‘respectable,’ have attained to the single diploma, which would have perfectly satisfied Hamilton! Yet for a long time preceding that in which Hamilton was loaded with a double degree, the northern universities had not allowed a single title to reach more than one or two of the many British Dissenters;

and the most eminent of these would have been unhonoured, but for the interference of American colleges. These learned bodies gave degrees with much discrimination ; yet occasionally some Scottish minister of humble talents and acquirements, little as a preacher, and *nil* as an author, and who, like Cowper's villager, was scarcely 'heard of half a mile from home,' had somehow impressed a United States college with the idea of transcendent merits. These, which were so small as to be invisible to his own countrymen, had, when travelling across the broad Atlantic, grown, like the poet's figure of 'Fame,' so wonderfully, as to have at length acquired the imposing dimensions which the foreign college felt constrained to recognise ; and, on the other hand, the Doctorship in Divinity, which that college thought a most just reward, but which, in crossing to Scotland, and crowning the recipient, gradually assumed quite a different aspect, and appeared as fit for the beadle as for the minister. On the whole, however, the American colleges distributed honours with as much fairness as is at present shown by our own universities ; and it will ever be gratefully remembered, that eminent theologians and preachers among Dissenters received degrees from the former during a long period, when the latter disowned and neglected them.

To return from this lengthened digression. The Leeds hearers were sounder critics and safer advisers when they urged Mr. Thomson to publish the sermons in memory of his brother, than they afterwards were in pressing Mr. Hamilton to issue his 'improvement' of a local hanging. The Discourses were mainly descriptive and meditative, and their strain invariably natural, vigorous, and tender ; and the Memoir was concise, graceful, and modest, the author being singularly scrupulous in avoiding every statement and epithet that would in the least exaggerate or over-colour his departed brother's talents, worth, or influence. His affection for his brother was

such that he was led to view speaking of him as a *sort of egotism*; and he shrunk from eulogy as if it somehow reflected on himself. He merely hinted at his brother's remarkable popular gifts, which were deserving of a minute analysis and the most emphatic praise. In private, he was wont to mention that Dr. James Hall of Edinburgh, and Mr. Lee of Horndean, had repeatedly affirmed his brother's pulpit delivery to be the finest and most powerful they had ever heard, and that quick-eared Englishmen admitted that neither in his pronunciation nor in his accent was there anything *Scotch*.¹ Though this biographical sketch introduced both his brother and himself with the utmost modesty, yet a casual reading of it several years after its publication led to his receiving, in 1829, from the University of Edinburgh the degree of A.M., and to his forming a close friendship with the Rev. Dr. Jamieson, who had suggested to some members of the *Senatus Academicus* that they should bestow this honour. The diploma is subscribed by Chalmers, Wilson, and the other professors. His eldest son, whom he had prepared to enter college at the very

¹ Mr. Peter Thomson had been more successful, though perhaps less careful, in this point than the late Dr. Balmer of Berwick. The Doctor, it is said, after preaching for the first time in Dr. Waugh's chapel, London, had in the vestry a brief talk with one of the elders, who, without any patronizing airs, expressed his high admiration of the matter and style of the discourse. 'Pray,' said the Doctor, 'will you be kind enough to point out any of the Scotticisms you chanced to detect in my pronunciation?' and the Doctor expected to be told of two or three, which he might learn to avoid in the future. 'Why, sir,' answered the elder, 'it was all *Scotch* from beginning to end!' Yet Dr. Balmer wrote pure and beautiful English, and all his discourses and essays that have been published are in language nearly faultless. Occasionally, however, he stumbled into a pool of *bathos*. When preaching once on death, and illustrating its frequent suddenness by the case of a sun-struck man, he added, 'He dies instantaneously, or *in a few minutes*!' In the admirable sermon which he contributed to the volume of discourses published by the Associate Synod, he mars a very splendid description of the scene of the resurrection and judgment by some phraseology about the 'repercussion' of the blast of the archangel's trumpet against the 'rocks.'

early age of *eleven*, was attending the Edinburgh University classes when this degree was granted ; and the young student was proud to see his father's name on the roll of honorary graduates. When Mr. Thomson thanked Professor Dunbar for having assisted in conferring the distinction, the Professor, who was in general more gruff than complimentary, replied, ' But you richly deserved it, sir ! '

On Mr. (afterwards Dr.) John Brown becoming editor of *The Christian Repository* in 1816, he urged his former fellow-student, Mr. Thomson, to join the staff of frequent contributors ; and the latter sent various papers—some of an exegetical kind, on difficult and disputed passages of Scripture ; some in discussion of social and ecclesiastical subjects ; and others reviewing new books of interest,—the last belonging to a department in which the *Repository*, under Dr. Brown's care, greatly excelled. There is now lying before us a letter, in which the editor desires Mr. Thomson to criticise a religious poem which had recently appeared, yet enters as minutely into the characteristics of the piece as if he had himself been then writing the critique. It gives a striking proof of an editor's conscientious care ; whilst the common idea is that the actual reviewer scarcely reads, and the editor of the reviewing periodical does not even open, the volumes so oracularly judged. It may, however, be doubted if in this case either the one or the other would have produced a satisfactory estimate.

He contributed to the volume of sermons by ministers of the Associate Synod a discourse on the words descriptive of the Ethiopian eunuch's state of mind after receiving the truth as it is in Jesus—' And he went on his way rejoicing ; ' and it is only a fair specimen of the excellence of his ordinary Sabbath ministrations, and is perhaps inferior in comprehensiveness and richness of views, and in sustained animation of sentiments, to the average of his ' action-sermons,' on which he bestowed unusual care.

In 1825 Mr. Thomson wrote a lengthy *Life of Augustus Toplady*, who is better known for a hymn which evangelical Christians, young and old, of all denominations, delight to sing, than for all his controversial divinity ; yet many warriors with the pen, as well as with the sword, have had their moods of exquisite harmony. This biography was written at the request of an enterprising bookseller in Berwick, who reprinted several standard works in theology, and sought to stimulate the sale by new prefaces or Lives. In the age immediately preceding, not a few voluminous collections in literature—such as Sterne's Works, in eight volumes—had been republished in the same little town ; but the coarse, thin paper, the worn-out type, and the careless printing, seemed to be well matched, and the grey page scarcely looked grimmer with the ink ; and, on the whole, the volumes must have been intended to be 'hawked about' over the country and at village fairs, and sold to rough and dirty hands that would have spoiled finer paper. Toplady, it may be presumed, came forth in cleaner linen, and in guise more respectable for a clergyman ; but we regret to confess that the *Life* has not come to hand, and we can only say that the author spent much time and labour upon it, and that he liked his subject,—circumstances which render it more than probable that he did not toil in vain to interest and instruct his readers.

In 1820 he published the funeral sermon which, at the request of the family, session, and congregation of his old professor, Dr. Lawson, he had preached on the death of that deeply venerated man of God. It was an honour which moved him, but never seemed to have excited either any vanity in him or envy in his brethren, that, among so many ministers who had been the Doctor's students, he should have been selected to officiate on the occasion ; and he sought to do it well, and he did it admirably. He felt that he could introduce Dr. Lawson into a sermon without any risk of indulging in a strain of adula-

tion ; and that, though the pulpit was not the place for either 'fearing the face of clay' when alive, or flattering it when dead, still it was the place for exhibiting and commending the rich grace of God in the character, conduct, and labours of His eminent saints. In preaching a funeral sermon for Dr. Lawson, he was only calling the Seceding people of Selkirk to comply with the apostolic injunction, and 'remember them that had the rule over them, and had spoken unto them the word of God.' 'Moses my servant is dead' has often been a text for the funeral sermon of a minister, and it fully justifies the service that honestly commemorates him who really was a 'servant' of God. The modern fastidiousness which would not have the life and figure of a new-buried pastor restored, in fancy and meditation, for a single hour to his pulpit, lest his old people might worship him, and forget his and their God and Saviour, sets aside a rare opportunity for salutary impression, under a groundless fear of harm to those who are far more likely to be signally profited. The crowd packed within and around the Selkirk meeting-house to hear Dr. Lawson's funeral sermon, is still spoken of by eye-witnesses as altogether unprecedented. One of the Professor's sons whispered to the preacher, as the latter was ascending the pulpit-steps, 'Adam, be brief, for the building is sure to fall !' Seceder architects, however, had a conscience, whatever doubts may be entertained of their taste ; and their clumsy, barn-like structures had a longer and less precarious life than may be allotted to the more graceful and costly temples that have succeeded them. Indeed, many of the former buildings continued to stand long after the taste and liberality of congregations had prepared both models and funds for successors ; for, while they were too ugly to be tolerated, they were too substantial, and often too comfortable, to be condemned. It was not a pleasant suggestion to whisper into the ear of the preacher, that his sermon might be cut short by the fall of the house. It would abbreviate, without otherwise improving, many eloquent sermons. But

Mr. Thomson disregarded it, and conducted all the solemn services without any perturbation from the predicted accident. The funeral sermon was repeated at Coldstream on the following Sabbath, when an immense congregation, made up of groups and companies from districts far and near, all eager to hear about the venerated Professor, assembled. The discourse was on Stephen and his burial,¹ and, after discussing the text and its lessons, closed with a singularly comprehensive, forcible, and faithful sketch of Dr. Lawson. For more than forty years this admirable man had no fuller and more elaborate commemoration than was contained in this sermon, until only a few years ago the Rev. Dr. John Macfarlane issued his graphic and fascinating biography, in which he has done all that could be done to collect and preserve materials that were rapidly passing away.²

The sermon was immediately published. Dr. David Welsh (afterwards the well-known Professor of Church History, and the first secretary of the Board of Her Majesty's sole and only Master Printers in Scotland, appointed on the downfall of the Bible monopoly) reviewed it in the *Christian Instructor*,

¹ By a curious coincidence, the Rev. Dr. James Peddie took the same text when preaching the funeral sermon for Dr. Lawson's successor in the professorship, Dr. Dick of Glasgow; and Dr. P. afterwards preached again from the same text on the occasion of Dr. Thomas Brown's (Dalkeith) death. The three sermons were all unlike each other.

² Of the many admirers who insisted, and kept insisting, that Dr. Lawson's sons should resolutely set about the preparation of a memoir of their father, Dr. Thomson was the most urgent. Immediately after the funeral, he earnestly advised the Rev. George Lawson to devote himself to the filial task, and pledged that he for one would begin to collect materials—as many others would be glad to do—and hand them over to that son for his free use in a biography. The following are extracts from a letter from the Rev. George Lawson to Adam Thomson, dated 'Kilmarnock, March 16, 1820.' After intimating that the unanimous wish at Selkirk was that the funeral sermon for his father should be published, he says: 'You spoke of a memoir. I know not well what to think or say on that affair. I am afraid that materials could scarcely be procured to make one of a decent size without much moralizing. You indeed proffered to take trouble in

and passed a hearty eulogium on its merits ; for in those days leading Churchmen were much more ready than at a subsequent period to welcome a Seceder's publications, and to offer them an honoured place in religious literature. The critique thus opens : ' Dr. Chalmers has observed, that he knows not "how an Established Church can be more effectually preserved either from stagnation or decay, than by being ever stimulated and kept on the alert through the talent and energy, and even occasional malignity, of private adventurers ;" and that among all the claims of Dissenters to "the gratitude of the public, he thinks that they have a higher still in their wholesome reactions on the Establishments of the land, in their fresh, vigorous, and ever-recurring impulses on a machinery, the usefulness of which they may disown in words, while in fact they are among the most effective instruments of its usefulness." In this respect we think the production before us must be of singular service. We do not at present recollect the names of our Established brethren in the neighbourhood of Coldstream ; but whoever they may be, they cannot be the worse for being "kept on the alert," by having amongst them a man who can write sermons like this ; and much as we venerate our theological professors,

collecting them, and I know that for this you are exceedingly well qualified. If you use some efforts for that purpose, we shall perhaps be enabled to judge of the practicability of the thing by your success. It strikes me that a very valuable and interesting part of such a memoir would be extracts from his letters, provided these could be readily obtained from those with whom he was chiefly in the habit of corresponding. What would you think of prefixing a memoir to his Lectures on the Proverbs, which it is very probable may be published ? I may mention that yesterday I had a letter from M. Ogle, Glasgow, stating that many characters (*sic*) of different denominations seemed anxious for a thing of the kind, requesting me to turn my attention to it, and expressing a wish to be the bookseller. I feel deeply indebted to you for the warm attachment you have shown to our family. I hope God will not suffer you to lose a rich reward. I trust our intercourse will not be so unfrequent as it has long been ; and I trust also that, like "Stephen's acquaintance with the Bible," I may "turn it to some good account." My dear Adam, yours ever truly,

'GEORGE LAWSON.'

we think that most of them would do well to pay attention to the following account of the late Professor of Divinity to the Associate Synod,' etc. (giving an extract of several pages from the sermon). A critic in the *Repository* indulged in some clerical strictures upon the 'divisions' followed, and would have preferred his own; but he gave high and unqualified praise to the sketch of Lawson.

Only a few weeks before the Professor's death, Mr. Thomson lost his own venerable father, whose conversation Dr. Lawson, when visiting Coldstream, had greatly enjoyed, and about whom he always made special inquiries when writing to the son.

The very last letter which Dr. Lawson wrote to any of his friends was a sympathizing and consolatory epistle to Mr. Thomson on the death of his father, who had long been an elder in the Coldstream Secession congregation.¹ From the time when the subject of our Memoir began to occupy a house of his own, it was his invariable custom, early each forenoon, to 'go down the street' into the Market-place to talk with his father, who was a man of peculiar shrewdness and sagacity, allied to a most engaging frankness and cordiality. It was a sad blank in the daily life of the minister when the opportunity of meeting with his father was finally closed, and no forenoon or a walk 'down the street' could restore the venerable presence and the cheerful and affectionate speech. On the first Sabbath after this bereavement, Mr. Thomson preached from the words, 'Our fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?'—a text which, forty years' afterwards, was selected

¹ This letter (with the exception of a paragraph of very kind remembrances to the family) appears in Dr. Macfalan's *Life of Dr. Lawson*, and is admirable in sentiment, as doubtless are the four or five lengthy unpublished letters, lying before us, from Dr. L. to Mr. T.; but they have one fault—their penmanship is nearly illegible. We have deciphered, in one of those letters intimating the death of his son John, some deeply pathetic sentences. His son Andrew adds a few lines expressive of the family gratitude for the kindness shown at Coldstream to the departed.

for his own funeral sermon, preached by his excellent colleague and successor in the pastorate of the Coldstream congregation, the Rev. P. Mearns.

The relief and support of the poor had often been forced upon his earnest study ; and in the cases of destitution which he encountered, he was ever charitable up to and beyond the measure of his ability. He came at last to the conclusion that it was the duty of Christian churches to care liberally for all the poor who were connected with them, and that, if this were done universally and properly, through the establishment of 'Congregational Friendly Societies,' there would be no pauperism *within* those churches, and that which showed itself *outside* of them would be easily dealt with, and at length extinguished. At that time pauperism was a fast-growing social evil, but it has subsequently attained to a far more alarming development ; and still it advances, threatening to overspread the land, and to absorb all its vast wealth and industry ; yet he believed that those Congregational Friendly Societies could grapple successfully with that evil. He tested the 'cure' by a local application, having formed a model friendly society within his own congregation ; and in 1827 he published his *Cure for Pauperism*, explaining and defending his principles and arrangements with great clearness and force. He thus characterizes any poor-law : 'That *legal* force which opens the hand of the *man*, goes directly to shut the heart of the *Christian*. And he who has been taught of God to "*put on* bowels of mercies, kindness, and charity," is thus tempted by his fellows to *put them off*.' He bases his remedy on the two axioms : '1st, That in this country, in ordinary circumstances, none need pecuniary aid from others while able to work for themselves ; and 2d, That he who provides for an evil, when it comes, does well ; but he who provides against its coming, does better.' The pamphlet was in the form of 'A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Thomas Chalmers ;' and it had, in manuscript,

been read aloud by the author to that great man, who, after almost every paragraph, expressed his warm approbation, and said emphatically of the whole production, 'IMPRIMATUR!'—his broadly Scotch pronunciation of the word giving it a vigour which would have astonished an Oxford scholar. No old licenser, however, though of episcopal rank, could have inspired the author with such an assurance of authoritative sanction; and the latter felt himself entitled to regard this 'imprimatur' by Chalmers as saying not only, 'Let this "Cure" be *printed*,' but also, 'Let it be widely *read*, and then fairly *applied*!' Previous to the lengthy interview at which this pamphlet on pauperism was read and discussed, he had enjoyed but four or five meetings with Chalmers; yet he had watched the career of Scotland's great evangelical preacher and professor with enthusiastic admiration, and resolved that his son, whilst studying divinity in the Secession Hall, should also have the benefit of Chalmers's original and splendid prelections, and of the indescribable stimulus which 'went forth' from his presence and speech. He desired that the young aspirant to the pulpit, who was being trained in the clear and sound science of theology by Dr. John Dick, should be at the same time acted upon by Chalmers's genius in oratory and philosophy; for though it would have been unjust, literally, to allege that the former gave the '*body* of divinity' faultlessly framed, articulated, and even clothed, and the latter breathed in the 'living soul,' yet in this figurative comparison there is more of truth than almost any simile contains. Chalmers had been recently placed in the metropolitan chair of Theology, the duties of which he was discharging in a way altogether unrivalled,—groups of accomplished laymen being attracted to attend him regularly. Mr. Thomson knew that his son was too fully instructed in the principles, and too ardently loyal to the memories and associations, of the Secession Church, to be 'perverted' to the Establishment, though he might intensely

admire the Professor in the latter. This Professor avowed himself much gratified at having a Seceding minister's son—who also aspired to be himself a Seceding minister—under his tuition; and he was kind enough to take a special interest in young Thomson. It may be mentioned that the *Cure for Pauperism* was in general well received, and met with several influential patrons, among whom was Sir John Sinclair. At the time when Mr. Thomson was deeply engrossed with the subject, he happened to be present in the Moral Philosophy class at the opening of a session, when Professor Wilson gave his introductory lecture on a legal provision for the poor, maintaining views directly antagonistic to those of his auditor. The latter had repeatedly met and conversed with Wilson, when both were travelling in the north of England, and when his son was admitted to the Moral Philosophy class; and he took the liberty, at the close of the lecture, to speak with the Professor about the principles which had just been advocated, expressing his concern to find that all his own conclusions had been unsparingly condemned. Wilson, in his grandly courteous way, assured him that he might dismiss all concern for any difference in their views, and added, 'You, Mr. Thomson, must have examined the question far more carefully and to better purpose than I have; but' (with a humorous twinkle in his flashing eyes, as he glanced towards the retreating students) 'I must find something to say to these young men!' And then he proceeded to put questions about the Merse and the Borders, and to expatiate long and eloquently upon their varied scenery. Mr. Thomson was too just to believe that Wilson was at all indifferent about the great social problem, or that he had, in haste and at random, laid hold of such views as might enable him to fill up an hour with a discourse pleasant to his students. The Professor's language of 'voluntary humility' and self-depreciation will easily bear this construction; but Mr. Thomson understood it as a polite method of waiving a discussion on

the subject of pauperism then and there, and readily followed the Professor dashing off among other topics.

In 1830 Mr. Thomson published his *Comparative View of the English and Scottish Dissenters*, with the design not only of showing their agreement in 'essentials,' and their differences in 'circumstantial,' but also of promoting their sympathy and intercourse with each other, and of 'provoking' each, after a candid comparison with the other, to follow a course of self-improvement. He knew thoroughly the *Scottish* Dissenters, of whom the overwhelming majority were the Seceders, his own brethren. He knew them at all stages of their training in literature, philosophy, and theology, and in all the spheres of their ministerial activity; and he knew them in all those diversities which Presbyterian parity cannot prevent—the diversities of talents, accomplishments, and character; the diversities of age—from twenty to fourscore; and the diversities of place—from a city charge to one either in a town or in a village. He knew them, too, in all the varieties of their social condition; and though these varieties did not stretch, in the ascending scale, above the point of the merely 'respectable and comfortable'—somewhere in the middle rank—and never came near the heights of that rank, far less did it approach the station of the 'upper ten thousand;—yet in the line descending from the middle class the varieties were many and striking enough, ranging from wealth or comfort to extreme poverty; and with all of them he was closely familiar. He had been a brother to each and all; he had often associated with them in the manse as well as in the church, and met them in the presbytery and Synod halls. Though he abounded in labours strictly pastoral, and at no time 'neglected his own vineyard,' yet the calls of his ministerial brethren, and evangelizing opportunities, carried him frequently abroad over Scotland; and thus he had ample facilities for acquaintance with the Seceding clergy. He had been repeatedly engaged to accompany depu-

tations from the London Missionary Society in portions of their Scottish tours.¹

On such occasions, too, his intimacy with the Kirk clergymen was greatly extended. The Established ministers, indeed, with whom his advocacy of missions brought him into friendly intercourse, were entirely of the Evangelical party; yet, though not a few of the Moderates were distinguished for amiability and geniality, high talents and scholarship, he was quite satisfied with the specimen he had known so long and well in Coldstream. In every aspect except the evangelical, Mr. Scott,

¹ We here append an application from the secretary, backed by an urgent appeal from the Rev. Dr. Waugh:—

‘LONDON, *May 28, 1827.*

‘MY DEAR SIR,—I am instructed by the Board of Directors most respectfully and earnestly to request your kind services on behalf of our Society, by joining the deputation appointed to visit Scotland, consisting of Rev. Dr. Philip and Rev. Henry Townley, on the 24th proximo, when it is proposed they shall commence their efforts for the Society in Edinburgh. By devoting as much time and exertion to this object as your convenience will allow, you will be rendering essential service to the cause; our funds being extremely low, owing to the extraordinary outlay of the past year, during which we have sent out upwards of THIRTY additional missionaries, including their families. I trust, my dear sir, you will have it in your power thus to serve us, by occupying such pulpits as may be obtained for you in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Paisley, etc. etc. To hear of your being able to comply with this request, will greatly oblige, yours very faithfully,

‘J. ARUNDEL, *Secy.*’

‘DEAR ADAM,—We, your dear brethren, feel it to be our imperious duty to unite in very seriously urging you to accede to the wishes of the Board of Directors. We assure you, our dear brother, that your compliance is closely connected with the prosperity of this sacred institution. We are deeply embarrassed, and look to you with confidence as to a friend altogether alive to the importance of our cause. It is not the enthusiasm of a weak mind to add, that you should consider this call as a voice from Heaven, which you well know you must not—and your heart dares not—refuse to listen to. Your being a Presbyterian and a Seceder will give facilities to your admission to many pulpits, both in the Secession and in the Kirk of Scotland. We beseech you, by every principle of obligation which the cross supplies, to acquiesce in our most earnest solicitation.

‘A. WAUGH AND WILLM. BROADFOOT.’

the parish minister, had been a genial and estimable man, and a pleasant and trusty neighbour ; but in religious views and sentiments the two ministers were wide asunder. Once Mr. Thomson, when in London, bought a copy of the well-known work, *The Force of Truth*, to present it to his neighbour. The latter had called to get the news from the great metropolis. Mr. Thomson took up the little volume, and mentioned that he had brought it from London as a present for Mr. Scott, adding, that it was entitled *The Force of Truth*, and was ‘written by a namesake.’ The parish minister, supposing it to be a literary essay—some harmless expansion in illustration of the old proverb, *Magna est veritas*, free from the offensive peculiarities of the gospel—eagerly stretched out his hand to receive the gift, and began to express his warm thanks ; but when the donor further remarked, ‘It gives a most interesting account of the author’s *conversion*,’—‘Then,’ abruptly broke in Mr. Scott, his animated look of pleasure passing suddenly into one of angry disappointment, and his hand dropping down to his side—‘Then I’ll have nothing to do with it. I don’t like *conversions* !’ This ‘master in Israel’ had none of *Nicodemus*’s original perplexity about conversion ; but he positively denied that conversion was for any other than blackguards and ruffians. On another occasion, Mr. Scott, when in the Secession manse, was telling of his attendance at a recent meeting of the Synod of Merse and Teviotdale, and mentioned that he had remained for a night in the hospitable manse of his reverend brother the parish minister of Kelso, Mr. Lundie. ‘But, Mr. Thomson,’ he continued, in a manner expressive of mingled astonishment and blame, ‘can you believe that, in the morning, when we were joined by other ministers who had come to breakfast, the bell was rung, the servants entered ; and singing, Scripture-reading, and prayers were regularly gone through, as at church ! Would not you, Mr. Thomson, have been ashamed to make such a parade of your religion before your brethren ?’ ‘No,’

was the reply ; 'if such a company of ministers or other friends had been in my house at breakfast, and if they saw no service of family worship, it must only have been because it had been attended to before they arrived, and I should have thought it due both to my Christian profession and to theirs to say so.' The parish minister's astonishment at witnessing a brother minister's observance of family devotion, reminds us of a gross display of ignorance once made by an aspirant to the sacred office, regarding the common attitudes in domestic worship. The student had called on a friend in the evening, when the latter was beginning the service ; and he joined the group, consisting of the friend and his wife, who had an infant of a few months in her arms. The wife led the singing, as the husband had no music ; but the latter read the chapter, and then the visitor knew neither what was to come next, nor which of the two was to be the performer. But this was not his chief perplexity, for he saw the husband kneeling for prayer, whilst the wife, having charge of a baby, continued to sit ; and the youth was painfully puzzled whether to kneel with the husband or to sit with the wife. He soon decided, however, on adopting a middle course between the alternatives, and proceeded to stretch himself out at full length (which was considerably more than six feet) on the sofa. He maintained this attitude until the officiating person rose from his knees. The student's father was an elder of the Kirk, and might have been expected to train his son to 'kneel' at the family altar 'before the Lord our Maker.' Such ignorance was more discreditable to a Scottish student than the blundering which not a few of his neighbours have been satirized for committing, about points of social etiquette. Chalmers, in looking back to his early days at the university, did not blush to remember that he had then a great deal of unsophisticated simplicity and rustic awkwardness, and that he was rather a slow pupil in the fine ways and manners of 'genteel' society. He was wont to

give a richly humorous account of his first breakfast in a professor's house ; the anxious attention to his toilet on that eventful morning ; the fluttering of heart which he felt on the door being opened, though he was a few minutes too early ; his confusion on seeing a lady alone in the room into which he had been shown ; but she kindly asked him to be seated, and he sat down on the *edge* of a chair, as if to leave room for three or four companions on the same seat. At intervals, the lady put several questions about the weather, the college, etc. etc. ; and in answering each, even when ' Yes, ma'am,' was all he said, he started to his feet, with his arms closely pinned to his sides—like a schoolboy at a class-examination—until his ' exceedingly demonstrative politeness drove the lady out of the room,' probably lest she might burst into laughter at the figure made by the big, brawny, and impulsive lad in sustaining his part in the conversation. Chalmers himself was amused, and not ashamed, to look back upon that figure ; but unquestionably he would have been ashamed, both for himself and for his father, if he could have been the student who, in utter bewilderment about a proper attitude, had stretched his full length on the sofa during a family prayer !

Whilst Mr. Thomson had, in his neighbour Mr. Scott, a socially pleasant specimen of the Moderates of the Kirk, he long enjoyed close personal intimacy, and much ministerial co-operation, with Mr. Hunter of Swinton, who was then an admirable representative of the Evangelicals ; though, after being for several years a minister of the Tron Church, Edinburgh, he did not adhere to his party in the Disruption struggle, but remained within the Establishment,—still, however, to perform faithfully all his pastoral duties. During his ministry at Swinton, Mr. Hunter was at one period for months resident in Coldstream on account of ill-health ; and then he was a daily visitor at the Secession manse, and regularly attended the Secession meeting-house every Sabbath evening.

He often remarked with a smile, 'I must be the greatest Seceder in my parish ; for, Mr. Thomson, I hear you preach far more frequently than any of my parishioners can hear a Secession minister !' He loved a quiet joke, and more than once, in his friend's house, told an anecdote of a 'strict Seceder, all of the olden times,' who, when his parish minister was engaged in making up a census of the local population, and had called to ascertain the number of members in his family, stoutly refused to give the desired information, until Scripture authority were produced for his compliance. 'Oh !' replied the minister, 'if that be all, I can easily satisfy you : "*Mark them that cause divisions.*"' Instantly, and with entire humility, the obstinate Seceder yielded, saying, 'I see, sir, you are quite right ;' and showing a readiness to give the names, not only of all the members of his household, but of all the persons, dead or alive, with whom he counted 'kith or kin.' The story was far, indeed, from having much keenness of edge or point ; but Mr. Thomson was not the man to allow his brother of the Kirk to flourish, even in good-natured jesting, such a weapon without blunting it, and compelling the jester to confess that it was impotent. He would hint that the Seceder of the story was at first far too absurdly 'strict' and obstinate either for fact or for fiction, and that afterwards, all at once, the same 'dour' Seceder became still more absurdly compliant and submissive in accepting such a perversion of an apostolic precept, as was not only wrong and irreverent, but insulting to Seceders, all of whom it indiscriminately stigmatized as wicked schismatics ! Mr. Thomson would mention that, in all his own experience, he had never met with the crazed Seceder who pled conscientious scruples against disclosing the number, or the names, or even the ages, of the members of his household ; and that he had never known, and could not even conceive of a Seceder stupid enough to acquiesce in the construction which the parish

minister put upon the Scripture words quoted,—a construction which clumsily yet flippantly caricatured Scripture, and coarsely abused Seceders ; and Mr. Hunter, and any other Established clergyman, would be challenged to say if, in their much narrower intercourse with the followers of the Secession, they had ever encountered the fabulous Seceder who sternly refused to number his children, until a silly but blasphemous and offensive quibble upon Scripture language was employed with miraculous effect. There must surely have been many stories, more humorous and far more probable, in the Moderate and Evangelical treasury, about ‘strict Seceders,’ than Mr. Hunter’s specimen, otherwise the prolonged laughter after many presbytery dinners must have been foolishly expended over dull illustrations. Was the following real anecdote about a ‘strict Seceder’ entered in the presbyterial collection ?

A parish minister had once resolved to visit from house to house, whether the occupants belonged to his own church or to the Secession ; for, as he argued, they were all equally his parishioners, whom it was his prerogative as well as his duty to superintend, examine, and pray with and for. The sheep might wander astray from him, and refuse to know his voice ; but he was the State-appointed shepherd for the whole parish, and were his duties to be restricted by the capricious withdrawal of some of the sheep from the fold ? He would treat them all alike, not even excepting their Seceding shepherd, who was, in law, only another of his sheep ! He would manage, either by the assertion of high authority for the timid, or in the exercise of art for the obstinate, to maintain pastoral relations towards all Seceders. He had been warned concerning a particular Seceding household, consisting of ‘Jock and his mother,’ as neighbours designated them. He soon saw that his design to offer a prayer must be abandoned, and he was about to leave, when the mother produced a refreshment of bread and cheese. The thought flashed into his mind that he might then

introduce his prayer in the form of a 'grace ;' and he stretched out his hands and closed his eyes, to intimate that he was entering upon a devotional service, when Jock interposed : ' Mother, ye'll ask the blessing, as ye aye do !' The clergyman was obliged to take his departure without having exercised any of his pastoral functions in the house of ' Jock and his mother,' whose Seceding principles were held more strictly than intelligently. The mother and son were opposed to church domination, and in this case they showed a firm and victorious front, whilst the intruder withdrew crest-fallen and in sore humiliation.

The ministers of the Scottish Establishment, having passed through exactly the same university training as their Seceding contemporaries, and having enjoyed a system of theological tuition which certainly was not superior to that provided for Seceding students, might have been put on the same level as ' Scottish Dissenters ;' but the author of *The Comparative View* did not mean to discuss the characteristics of the clergy of the English Establishment, and he was therefore altogether silent about those of their brethren in the Scottish Establishment. When travelling in England, he held but little intercourse with Episcopalian clergy, though at home some who were settled on the southern side of the Border were on most friendly terms with him. At one period a clergyman, whilst engaged to do duty in a neighbouring English parish, was resident in Coldstream ; and he was wont to attend Mr. Thomson's Sabbath evening sermon, and then left the church for the manse, where he remained for family worship and supper. Another of those clergymen, equally amiable and unsectarian, but far less versant both in scriptural and in systematic theology, was an almost daily visitor at the same manse in Coldstream. One evening he was there at supper, which was always preceded by family worship ; and the Rev. Mr. Lee of Horndean, happening to be a guest for the night, was engaged to conduct the devotions.

The Episcopalian afterwards, when alone with Mr. Thomson, spoke highly of Mr. Lee's manners and conversation, but professed to be *shocked* at the 'awfully irreverent' terms Mr. Lee had made use of in prayer, having actually called the blessed Saviour a 'fellow !' Mr. Lee, in adoring the Second Person of the mysterious Trinity [the triune God presenting divine perfections in divine communion for divine delight], had employed the Scripture language which styles Him 'the fellow and equal' of Jehovah ; and the Episcopalian clergyman did not know that this was a Scripture phrase, and took it altogether in its *slang* sense !

As Mr. Thomson did not mean to describe the clergy of the Church of England, having but a slight acquaintance with them, he determined to exclude from his *Comparative View* the clergy of the Church of Scotland, though these, in many varieties, were well known to him. His aim was to represent and compare the Nonconformist ministers of the south, those belonging to the Baptist and the Independent bodies, with their brethren of the north, the Seceders, and the Relief-men, who were almost identical with and were at length united to the Seceders, taking the designation of 'United Presbyterians.' In his extensive and oft-renewed intercourse with those English Dissenters, he met their most powerful and brilliant preachers, as well as the more numerous classes that ranked beneath them in pulpit gifts and attractions. M'All (whose elocution, apart from his glowing imagination and keen intellect, was so wonderful, that many foreigners regularly attended him for the grand yet exquisite music of his voice), Raffles, Kelly, Jay, Angell James, Binney, the Claytons, Fletcher, Hamilton, always gave him a warm welcome ; and he felt that they had a readiness, a power, and a polish of speech which has been but seldom attained by any Scotch minister. He never heard them in public without thinking what ornaments, and what centres of spiritual influence, such men would be

within the Secession Church. The less distinguished of the English Dissenters—those forming the majority—seemed to be of quickly available talent and cultivation, and displayed fervid evangelical zeal, along with purity of doctrine. After the publication of the volume, there came a period of several years during which the author was called to see far more of England, and to associate more widely and intimately with English Dissenting ministers, than he had ever done before. In advocacy of the unfettered and cheap circulation of the Bible, he, for ten years, visited the south far more frequently, and met more freely with the Nonconforming clergy there, than previously ; yet this subsequent intercourse only confirmed, and did not modify, his first views and estimates.

In comparing the English with the Scottish Dissenters, he began at the point which relates to the selection and destination of a youth to be reared for the sacred office ; and he found that in the south greater care was taken to test his personal piety than in the north, where neither congregations nor church courts showed an interest in candidates at such an early stage, but left these to their own impulses, or to the parental will. Among English Dissenters, ministers and churches eagerly look out for individuals in the rising generation that are fitted by talents and a love of learning, and, above all, by personal Christianity and evangelical zeal, to enter hopefully on a course of education for the ministry. They may be sometimes deceived about the very qualification which they regard as the most indispensable ; still they are much more likely to have a select admission than is known in Scotland, where, at the same stage, there is an absence of all scrutiny. This contrast, however, though real, is not owing to any difference between the Presbyterian and the Independent systems, for in connection with the former, there is machinery which could be worked most effectually for testing, setting apart, and superintending the most pious and intellectually promising among

the young in a district or province, and not merely in a congregation.

The author proceeds to compare the respective courses of training in the two countries ; and whilst he admits that students at the Scotch universities may have much greater facilities for progress in classical literature, logic, and mental and moral philosophy than could be found at any of the English Dissenting academies, he doubts whether our students have largely availed themselves of those facilities, and whether such branches of study exercise a salutary influence in preparing for theological inquiry and ministerial duty. Perhaps he underrates the value of classical studies as disciplining the intellect, and exaggerates the tendency of classical literature to inspire youth with antichristian and noxious sentiments, and to impart the very culture which led the Greeks to regard the apostolic preaching of the cross as 'foolishness.' Julian the apostate gave a striking proof of what he conceived to be the utility of the Greek and Roman classics in training for the exposition and defence of Christianity, when he issued an edict forbidding to the Christians 'the study of heathen learning.' Gibbon describes him as arguing that 'the men who exalt the merit of implicit faith are unfit to claim or to enjoy the advantages of science, and that if they refuse to adore the gods of Homer and Demosthenes, they ought to content themselves with expounding Luke and Matthew in the churches of the Galileans.' But his real reason is brought forward by Milton : 'For,' said Julian, 'the Christians wound us with our own weapons, and with our own arts and sciences they overcome us.' 'And, indeed,' continues Milton, 'the Christians were put so to their shifts by this crafty means, and so much in danger to decline into all ignorance, that the two Appollinarii were fain, as a man may say, to coin all the seven liberal sciences out of the Bible, reducing it into divers forms of orations, poems, dialogues, even to the calculating of a new Christian grammar. But, saith the his-

torian Socrates, the providence of God provided better than the industry of Appollinarius and his son, by taking away that illiterate law with the life of him who devised it—so great an injury they then held it to be deprived of Hellenic learning, and thought it a persecution more undermining and secretly deranging to the church than the open cruelty of Decius or Diocletian.'

The author gives his next chapter to a minute and impartial comparison of the *theological* training of the English Dissenters with that provided for the Scottish Seceders. Tuition by means of catechizing and drilling is largely followed in the English academies; and it can scarcely be doubted that oral examination is far more instructive than *lecturing*, except in the very few cases where the prelections are original and stimulating; and even in such cases the lecturing should be combined with copious examinations. In England the students are under the close superintendence of their tutors, who have the opportunity of uniformly influencing and guiding them in the formation, not only of opinions and views, but of habits and of character, since they all study and lodge under one roof, and constitute one family; whilst in Scotland students merely meet with their tutors for an hour or two daily in the class-room, and are their own keepers and advisers during all the remainder of their time. A still more important advantage for English students was, that they *learned to preach* during their theological course, and acquired the faculty of addressing audiences in an unembarrassed and effective manner; so that, on leaving the academy, they possessed not only a competent knowledge of evangelical truth, but skill and experience in communicating it impressively, and were ready to appear as candidates in the vacant charges. In Scotland, on the contrary, students had their lips sealed down to the day of licence; and then they were required to preach to congregations—often large and crowded ones—before they had acquired the art of public speaking, or shaken off the

panic which attends the first stepping into a pulpit and confronting an audience. The 'first sermon' in Scotland was an ordeal which appalled many a stout heart that had defied and conquered the most formidable difficulties on the road to learning ; and stalwart Levites stood up pale and trembling before the congregation, to stammer through the service with pain to themselves and their hearers, but sometimes to lose their consciousness, and fall into a fainting fit, or, what was considered still worse, to lose their memory, and 'stick.'

The English and Scottish Dissenters are next represented and compared at the stage of being 'probationers and candidates for ordination,' along with the regulations that guide them. Then their respective methods of preparing for the pulpit, their styles of preaching, and the manner in which they discharge the various pastoral duties, are carefully judged, and many valuable suggestions offered. He found that his own brethren had more to learn from, than to teach to, the English Dissenters. After describing their respective methods of admitting hearers to church membership, he proceeds to the department of 'Public Worship,' and discusses their views and practices regarding psalmody, the reading of the Scriptures, and the dispensation of the Lord's Supper, giving special prominence to the question of 'frequent communion,' and to that also of 'free communion.' The author was far in advance, both of his times and of his brethren, in the views which he then advocated upon all these topics, though he was keenly alive to, and strongly moved by, the solemn associations investing several of the 'traditions and customs of the *Scottish* elders,' such as the sacramental week-days and the succession of 'table addresses.' The standing controversy between Independents and Presbyterians about 'creeds and confessions' and 'church government' is fairly stated and admirably disposed of, the author decisively giving the weight of evidence and of advantage to the Presbyterian side.

It must not be forgotten that the spirit and views of this volume were new and bold at the date of its publication. The English and the Scottish Dissenters were almost strangers to each other; for the campaign which their allied forces conducted against State Churches, and which gave them, as they fought side by side, a fuller mutual knowledge in a day than they would otherwise have received in an age, had not yet been opened or even foreseen. As yet they had not been formed into the army of Anglo-Scotch Voluntaries, nor had the value of a hearty co-operation been felt by the two bodies. Previous generations of Seceders had rather contemptuously denounced Independency as identical with 'mob-rule,' or 'anarchy,' in the household of faith; and a certain irregularity or laxity, which was offensive to staid Seceders, was supposed to characterize its doctrine as well as its discipline. And not only to look with obvious favour upon this disorderly system, but to propose borrowing from its preaching and its government several great improvements that should supersede or modify what had always been highly esteemed among Seceders, required no ordinary courage.

He next published an impressive 'ADDRESS,' delivered at the formation of the *Coldstream Congregational Commemorative and Benevolent Society* on the 2d May 1832, this being the day appointed as one of public thanksgiving for deliverance from the *cholera*, which had paid its *first* visit to this country, committing the most rapid and alarming ravages. Coldstream, though, like Zoar, a 'little city,' was not spared by this pestilence, which for nearly two months kept possession of the place, and made the inhabitants feel as if they passed their days and nights 'among the tombs,' and might at any moment fall into their own. The following description, taken from the 'Address,' is not more vivid than true:—

'The raging of spasmodic cholera in our town and parish during the months of February and March last, forms an era

in our history. Probably about a *seventeenth* part of the inhabitants of the town were attacked with less or more severity ; and nearly a *forty-fifth* part, after short but in some cases most intense suffering, were hurried to the grave. Not a few of the number were persons highly respectable both in circumstances and in character ; and by their surviving relatives and friends, the period during which the pestilence proceeded with such destructive march “to walk in darkness, and to waste at noon-day,” can never be thought of but with feelings of deepest sorrow. All of us, indeed, were made in various ways to suffer during the continuance of the calamitous visitation. However free from the disease, or even, if that were possible, from the fear of it, what man’s heart was not appalled at the accounts every morning, and for a time almost every hour, received of the seizure, the sufferings, or the death of others ? Can any of us ever forget our feelings when, as “death’s shafts were flying so thick around us,” we saw the coffins and the carriages of the dead passing and repassing in quick and almost constant succession, and did not know but that we might ourselves be the next whom, with few perhaps but hired attendants, they might convey to the tomb ? When friends met in little groups at night to condole with one another, as they listened to the heart-rending details of the day, they separated, as they had met, with feelings of sorrow and alarm, which their countenances as well as their conversation showed that they were unable to repress, and with such feelings the more excited and agonized from the apprehension that, though then in health, they might never in this world meet more. Few retired to rest without the dread that they might awake in the grasp of death, and find that the summons was given to tear them from their families and friends, and to place their disembodied spirits, prepared or unprepared, before the tribunal of the Supreme Judge, to hear the sentence fixing their eternal doom ! Some whom we can yet hardly think of but as still living among us,

—some whom we had long seen occupying a prominent and active place in society, and over whose fate who does not feel even now inclined to drop a tear?—some whose removal has formed a grievous blank in the families with which they were connected, and in the circle of friends in which they moved, —parted with individuals of these friends apparently untainted with disease on the evening of one day, and the next, “levelled by the hand of death, lay sleeping in the tomb.” The scenes which were thus witnessed in families, I could find no terms adequate to describe. I shrink from the attempt. In proportion to the grievous nature of the visitation which we formerly had to deplore, is the greatness of the deliverance which we have now met to commemorate. The day when our town was pronounced “clean,” and when there were no “remaining cases,” slight or severe, to post on the places of public concourse, which had for weeks been crowded to and examined with intense anxiety, was indeed a day of mercy, for which we should all bless the “God of our life” while He suffers a spark of life to remain in our mortal frames, and the power to cherish a grateful feeling in our immortal spirits.’

It was a strange coincidence, that during the fatal epidemic only *one member* of the large Secession congregation, along with other three individuals indirectly connected with that congregation, died. Whilst calling his people to special gratitude for this singular preservation, Mr. Thomson was not the man to encourage in them any pharisaic pride for their superior holiness as individuals, or as a congregation, or as a sect.

During the dismal period of the pestilence [it invariably received at its first visit the full and high-sounding name of cholera-morbus; but its several subsequent visits seem to have inspired more familiarity, and it is now briefly called cholera], the medical men of the town agreed in strongly urging that ministers should in general refrain from visiting those who had been seized by the epidemic, lest they should carry the deadly

infection into the many circles that were open to them. It had been found that cholera patients were incapable, at the stages when friends sent for a minister, of attending to and profiting from any religious conversation ; or, at least, against a bare possibility of advantage, there was to be set off a very large and real mischief. For a single patient who might, when in 'collapse,' have been soothed by a few words from his minister, there might soon have been a score or two of patients who had directly received the terrible infection through that minister's visit, and who would, in turn, spread it more widely abroad. The most of the clergymen of the district consented to yield a general obedience to the medical injunction regarding this unknown and fearfully malignant disease ; not, indeed, out of consideration for themselves or their families, but with a view to the health of the town. Mr. Thomson was never kept by fear for himself or his family from visiting either Seceders or strangers who were laid prostrate by the most dangerous fever, and from conversing and praying in a heavily tainted atmosphere. Medical men now, however, are less scrupulous about clerical visits to cholera patients. They are far from encouraging, yet they do not interdict, such visits ; nor do they think that there is any heroism in the visitor, or cowardice in the absentee.

Mr. Thomson had concluded that thanksgiving for the local deliverance from the plague could not be more acceptably expressed than by the Benevolent Congregational Society which he instituted. In the course of the 'Address' he gave due honour to the Rev. Mr. Goldie, who had been recently settled as parish minister, and whose co-operation with the Secession and the Relief ministers in stirring up their people to liberality had, during the winter, raised the sum of £136, to be expended in supplying the most destitute families with food, clothing, and fuel.¹

¹ A Relief congregation had, shortly before this, been formed, and was flourishing under the pastoral care of the Rev. J. S. Taylor, now a United

But a great conflict on the question of STATE CHURCHES was at hand ; and Mr. Thomson, though a man of peace, and living in a rural sphere, aloof and far distant from the centres of ecclesiastical and political agitation, as well as having, in the round of his manifold duties, full scope for all his energies, yet threw himself into the foremost ranks of the fiery combatants, and was found, during the protracted struggle, in the 'high places of the field,' acting with skill and boldness both on the offensive and on the defensive against a host of distinguished foemen. When the Voluntary controversy broke out in Scotland, the Secession Church—which had, through the promptitude of such sons as Ballantyne of Stonehaven and Marshall of

Presbyterian minister in Glasgow,—a very eloquent preacher and accomplished man, who in youth was an intimate friend of Mr. Thomas Aird (the well-known original poet, whose fame is still growing, whilst that of many of his contemporaries is declining). With Mr. Taylor and his excellent successor, Mr. Porteous, Mr. Thomson was on the best of terms—walking as with brethren. Mr. Goldie, the new parish minister, held evangelical views, which he could expound and illustrate with singular power ; but his colloquial wit, and his brilliant social gifts and fascinations, were often allowed a scope that interfered with due preparation for the pulpit ; and they sometimes assumed a levity (the 'jesting' which St. Paul, with equal emphasis and delicacy, censures as 'not convenient' for Christians either to utter or to hear) that marred the effect of his earnest preaching. With such faculties as his, both for thinking and speaking, under uniformly wise regulation, he might have risen to a high sphere of usefulness. Though it is not improbable that his fluent utterance in the pulpit was none the less popular for carrying much lighter and looser thought than careful study would have provided, yet the contrast between the seriously and passionately evangelical cast of all his preaching, and the free-and-easy demeanour and talk which characterized him out of the pulpit, might tend to weaken the influence of the former upon not a few hearers. Times were thus greatly changed since the date of Mr. Thomson's ordination. Then, except his own, there was no evangelical preaching in the district ; the only other labourer being a 'canny' Moderate, who did not acknowledge the slightest need for a gospel except to the flagrantly criminal and vicious, and gave *humdrum* sermons in favour of pagan morality. Now, however, two new evangelicals—men of ability and eloquence—appeared in the little Border town, and Mr. Thomson rejoiced in their co-operation, and had no reason to dread their rivalry. Mr. Goldie died in the prime of life, before the subject of this memoir.

Kirkintilloch, a principal share of the honour of having begun it—also bore a large part in conducting it, and enjoys not a little of the glory for the victories won. The views advocated by the Seceders as Voluntaries were far indeed from novel: they had been both held and fully embodied in the apostolic and primitive Church, and long afterwards they had been stated and defended by Milton with unrivalled force; but they had been withdrawn from living debate, and shelved with questions of obsolete interest, except when they got an airing at the ordination of Independent ministers in England. The first Seceders had not held or apprehended them, from failing to go down to the root of those evils against which they testified; a second generation of Seceders seemed to be *groping* towards them, as their discussions about the ‘power of the magistrate’ indicated. But their descendants lived in a new era, when discoveries of all kinds came rapidly—almost like revelations, or the illuminations of a tropical sunrise; and scarcely were the objections against any State Church exhibited, when those descendants, who had become a numerous and influential denomination, forthwith and all but unanimously perceived that they were unanswerable, and acknowledged that Christ’s spiritual kingdom over and within men could take no dictation and no material help from the State, without permitting Christ’s authority, His kingdom’s independence and spiritual progress, and the liberty of many consciences, to be injuriously compromised. They saw that those views did not contradict, but more fully and consistently developed, their forefathers’ testimony; and secession from that Establishment, which the Erskines had good reason for leaving, had properly ripened into *dissent* from all civil establishments of religion, which never existed without encroaching upon Christ’s authority, the Church’s independence and well-being, and the liberties and rights of all citizens who were outside the pale of that Church. The Reform Bill gave Dissenters a new influence in municipal

corporations and over Parliament ; and they were assured that their discussions would tell practically upon public opinion and the course of legislation.

Mr. Thomson was among the first to receive the new views, as scriptural, just, and expedient ; and he realized the many and important changes which would, sooner or later, inevitably follow the discussion of Voluntaryism in such an era. He had perfect confidence in the overthrow of all civil establishments and endowments of religion, and in the deliverance of every Church from State alliance and aid ; but he could scarcely have expected that, during the ten or twelve years of incessant public discussion, Voluntaryism would achieve what it did ; and still less that in the subsequent interval, inclusive of the ever-memorable year of 1868 (when the decree against the State Church of Ireland has gone forth!)—an interval of rest and silence apparently ignoble and unprofitable—Voluntaryism could have grown so immensely and rapidly, that whenever it moves, it will make unprecedented strides of progress ! Some observers may think it strange, that a cause which has done so much, and is preparing for grander enterprises, and showing that it alone can solve many difficult problems before British statesmanship, should at this very time seem to be abandoned by the Seceders, who were its devoted and united champions, but who are now seeking partnership with a denomination that quite as zealously fought against it, and that still disowns it. True, in proposing that, in their union with Free Churchmen, Voluntaryism shall be an ‘open question,’ and not a ‘term of communion,’ Seceders are not formally displacing Voluntaryism from among their standing articles ; for it was never there. Nor had it been in the least necessary ; for surely the one or two clergymen, and the three or four laymen, who held the abstract lawfulness of a State Church, might be admitted into communion with five hundred ministers and some hundred thousands of members—all decided Voluntaries—without in

the least endangering the Voluntary principle, this being safe in the keeping of such an army against whatever could be attempted by the small group. It will, however, be altogether a different case when, in place of this 'handful' of anti-Voluntaries, there is the multitudinous Free Church host, that might swamp the Voluntary Seceders, and drown their most emphatic testimony. Even then the cause will not want its champions, or miss its triumphs, though Seceders should disband themselves; and doubtless the great movement for union has at present the most urgent recommendations and the most solemn sanctions. Adam Thomson would have rapturously hailed the negotiations that are now going on for an incorporating union between the Free and the United Presbyterian Churches; for the vision of such a church as they will form was always prominent in his every prospect of a bright future for Scotland.

Perhaps no controversy in Scotland was ever so general or so keen as that which raged between the supporters and the opponents of State Churches. It drew the entire church-going population into the field of strife. Apart from its being the subject of public discussion, carried on by clergymen in innumerable pamphlets, lectures, and speeches, it became the topic of still more free and animated debate in all the scenes of social life. It found no neutrals, consisting either of those who 'halted between two opinions,' or of Gallios, who 'cared for none of those things;' but tenacious partisans, who, when defeated, were not convinced or even silenced, but 'could argue still.' Laymen of all classes, belonging to the two sides, could not meet on the street, in their houses, in their places of business, on stage-coaches, on their way to market or to church, to funerals or to marriages, without the Voluntary question being introduced and discussed absorbingly as long as they were together. At village corners, the bands of strip-lings that had been wont to turn out on summer evenings for

foolish lounging, or still more foolish mischief against passers-by, were found to have 'resolved' themselves into debating clubs, eagerly engrossed with the single topic of universal interest. Even ladies, with their sharp weapons and unyielding spirit, entered the lists against each other on this question, not to compose, but to aggravate the strife.

Mr. Thomson took a prominent part in the Voluntary campaign at all its stages, and in pamphlets and periodical articles, in lectures and speeches, fought boldly and skilfully against the most formidable champions of Establishments. Like the most of his Dissenting brethren, he had gone through little or no training either for oral or for written debate ; yet he wielded his logic and sarcasm with admirable dexterity and force, proving that he was master of the weapons, however new. In his various Voluntary pamphlets, which would form a bulky volume, he expatiated over the whole field, and sought to confront every argument for Establishments, and every objection against Voluntaryism, that had been advanced. The scriptural and ecclesiastical, the political and social aspects of both systems, were searchingly examined and vividly contrasted ; and he never failed to give an emphatic demonstration of his reasons for rejecting the one and for receiving the other. We could select conclusive replies to many plausible reasonings that have been recently offered on behalf either of State-recognition or State-endowment of the Church ; and by looking a little into those pamphlets, Drs. Cook, Begg, and Gibson would find themselves answered before they spoke. Those replies were, indeed, originally addressed to formidable antagonists, viz. to Dr. Inglis and Dr. Chalmers ; for the Border champion of Voluntaryism not only took charge of and kept in order his many provincial opponents—the fighting Churchmen of the Merse and Teviotdale Synod, Drs. Brown of Langton and Cormack of Stow, and Messrs. Goldie and Strachan—repelling their varied assaults, but he also moved to the front, and engaged with

combatants of such 'might and mastery' as the two named, one of whom had more than a national reputation. Mr. Thomson's first 'passage-at-arms' was with Drs. Inglis and Chalmers, in a publication entitled *The Might and Mastery of Establishments Laid Low*,—a title perhaps somewhat infelicitous, and apparently not in keeping with his usual modesty, as proclaiming at the outset the decisive overthrow which he really inflicted before the close of his assault. In a month or two he issued another long pamphlet (of 80 pp.), with the title, '*An Appeal from Scotland ; or, The Cry of a Whole Nation of Dissenters urging their Claims to the Redress of their Grievances : a Speech addressed to the Right Honourable the Lord Chancellor of England (Brougham), as Judge in Equity. By a Voluntary Advocate.*' This production is marked by concise vigour of narrative and description, by close and concentrated reasoning, and by a quiet humour which alternates with keen sarcasm. In the same year he published '*The Church and the Voluntaries : Two Letters addressed to George Buchan, Esq. of Kelloe*'—occasioned by what had just taken place on the hustings at Greenlaw during an election. Having gone to witness the nomination proceedings, he found himself pushed forward by the crowd to the foot of the hustings, when some of the officials and electors, recognising him, invited and drew him up to a place beside them, though he had not sought or liked the peculiar elevation. The sequel was still more unexpected. The Tory candidate, Sir Hugh Campbell of Marchmont, when championing, in his address, the 'Church,' made such assaults upon the position, policy, and claims of Dissenters, as moved Mr. Thomson on the spot to raise his voice on behalf of the assailed. He craved permission to put a few questions to the Tory candidate, who, in the ingenuousness of youth, confessed that the Church to which he had given his pledge of strenuous defence was the prelatic body that had persecuted the 'Kirk' to which his ancestors belonged, and had persecuted the very

ancestors of whom he had most reason to be proud ; and that, when he promised to support the policy of excluding all Dissenters from the great English universities, he knew that such a policy would extend its harshness and injustice to all who belonged to the Kirk of Scotland ! Of what use, then, to the Presbyterian clergy and laity of Berwickshire, would it be to have as their representative a sworn defender of the supercilious and exclusive Prelatic Church ? Attendant lawyers, among whom was Mr. Campbell Swinton, whispered into Sir Hugh's ears the most plausible explanations and apologies ; but they failed to deliver him from the confusion into which the few questions threw him ; and a few closing comments by the interrogator rendered ' confusion worse confounded.' The writer of this Memoir happened, as a mere boy, to be present at the scene, and remembers how distinctly the queries were put by Mr. Thomson's remarkably clear and powerful voice, which rose above all the uproar, and reached the extremity of the vast crowd ; and how the references to the treatment which ' bloody Prelacy ' gave to Sir Patrick Hume, and to thousands of humbler yet not less estimable Presbyterians, drew forth such an outburst of general and prolonged applause as greeted nothing that fell from the political speakers. On a subsequent day, when the result of the poll was declared, Mr. Buchan of Kelloe took the opportunity, in Mr. Thomson's absence, to resent the latter's intermeddling with, and catechizing of, the Tory candidate, to denounce him as a ' political agitator ' and ' incendiary,' and to pour out upon him and his Dissenting brethren a torrent of invective. Mr. Buchan had extended to the Secession minister of Coldstream a warm personal friendship when they were labouring together on behalf of the Bible Society and other great evangelical enterprises which the clergy of the Establishment generally despised ; but Voluntaryism excited, in the worthy squire's mind, a dislike and a horror which made Moderatism not only tolerable, but welcome !

In the same year Mr. Thomson contributed to the *United Secession Magazine* a lengthy article on 'The Union of the Old Light Seceders with the Established Church ; a Review of the Proceedings of the Synod of Merse and Teviotdale.' This paper was reprinted in a separate form, and received wide attention. It is the most witty and mirth-provoking of all his productions, but none the less effective in dealing with the misrepresentations and the clumsy sophistry of provincial Churchmen, who experienced that to *perish by pleasantry* is the most torturing of all fates. His opponents and their arguments topple over in the most funny way ; yet they are not the less surely and helplessly overthrown. The review of Mr. Goldie's speech is a piece of exquisite satire. The parish minister of Coldstream greatly excelled in conversational raillery and banter ; but in his case, as in all other cases we have known, these gifts cannot be transferred from the social circle and the after-dinner atmosphere to the hall of public debate, where the wit that 'set the table in a roar' is found to have escaped, and cannot raise the faintest laugh ; still less do they bear the test of being put into print, where they would appear intolerably dull. After an hour of most animated banter, the hearer cannot remember a single felicitous 'point : ' what, then, would survive to give brilliancy to a speech or to a pamphlet ?

In the following year, when the Established ministers had broken up the Berwickshire Auxiliary Bible Society, for the avowed reason that their Dissenting colleagues were Volunteers, Mr. Thomson issued a pamphlet (of 85 pp.), entitled '*Calumny Exposed, and the Conduct of Dissenters Vindicated ; a Letter to the Rev. John Brown, D.D., Langton, in reply to a statement of the causes which led to the dissolution of the late Berwickshire Auxiliary Bible Society.*' This 'John Brown, D.D.,' was not the celebrated Secession minister and professor of that name, but the parish minister of Langton,

—a smaller man in intellect and general culture, as well as in theological learning and Biblical criticism ; yet he, too, like the greater John Brown, had been Adam Thomson's fellow-student for years at Selkirk, and had been born and reared within the pale of the Secession. He afterwards, however, deserted that Church, and cast in his lot with the richer Establishment. In dissolving the provincial Bible Society, he sought to brand the Voluntaryism of Seceding ministers as dangerous to the best interests of Church and State ; and yet, when announcing bad things of those ministers, and freely insinuating far worse, he expressed himself as overflowing with charity, compassion, and forgiveness for them, and he fervently hoped that they would be brought to repentance of view and amendment of conduct ; otherwise he trembled to think what a burden of remorse would be accumulating for their death-beds. The 'letter' of reply, though in the name of 'The Berwickshire Voluntaries,' was written by Mr. Thomson ; and it demolished the Doctor's case, as well as vindicated Dissenters in their assaults upon civil establishments and endowments of religion. The style would be accounted as often too contemptuous, and still more frequently too severe, for the *present times*, when nothing, it seems, either for or against VOLUNTARISM can be tolerated unless it be overflowing with gentleness and amiability, and free from all indignation at exclusiveness and injustice ; yet, curiously enough, the controversies which arise in these bland and peace-lipsing times are discussed with as much heat, acrimony, and violent invective as were displayed upon Voluntaryism in the era of its agitation ; and the inference must be, not that the times are essentially changed in spirit, and have lost their harshness and uncharitableness in dealing with all differences, so that debaters about these pleasantly 'agree to differ,' but that those times have become much more indifferent and neutral about Voluntaryism, and from not having strong impressions and

convictions, do not relish strong expressions on the subject. To find the genuine spirit and temper of our times, mark them when contemporary subjects are introduced and debated, and listen to their language when speaking of what comes home to their freshest passions, prejudices, and interests. The present age is, on its own native questions, quite as virulent and abusive in speech as was its predecessor on the Voluntary question. We neither defend nor palliate the insinuations which were recklessly thrown out, on both sides, against the character and motives of opponents. As almost everybody joined in the controversy, the offences against Christian charity were sure to be proportionally numerous and flagrant; and good men, disputing with each other, forgot that they were brethren. A common and culpable characteristic was, that each party grossly depreciated the intellectual qualities of the leading men in the opposite ranks.

In the following year, when Mr. Thomson was Moderator of the United Secession Synod, he published a long letter (135 pages) to 'The Right Hon. Lord Viscount Melbourne,' then Prime Minister, about 'the claims of Dissenters on the Government of the country.' These claims are most calmly, powerfully, and conclusively urged. Soon after he issued a companion-letter about 'the claims of CHURCHMEN on the Government of the country.' This latter publication was anonymous, and few ever traced it to its author, whilst many were simple enough to imagine that it was the appeal of a *bona fide* Churchman, though they rather wondered at his exorbitant claims, and at the frankness with which he disclosed the Church's ambitious designs, and confessed the want of spirituality in her spirit and views. It was, indeed, far too lengthy a piece of irony to be controversially effective.

The foregoing pamphlets, along with some forcible and racy articles in the *Eclectic Review*, he, in the midst of his many pastoral labours, produced in rapid succession, though his was far

from being 'the pen of a ready writer,' and though both the manual and mental parts of the process of composition were got through by him with more than ordinary slowness. Yet the preparation of those elaborate tracts was not the whole or even the principal burden which he undertook in the Voluntary cause. His advocacy was more by voice than by pen ; and he sought in all districts of the kingdom to enlighten and stimulate the people about that cause by speeches and lectures. At the request of the 'Young Men's Voluntary Church Association,' he delivered in Edinburgh a masterly and comprehensive lecture on Patronage, which was also published.

It is here only just to mention, that in the Border province there was another Secession minister—the Rev. Henry Renton of Kelso, a man of singularly high-toned honour and courage, and distinguished for strength and keenness of intellect, and for rare powers of eloquent exposition, and of subtle, forcible, and ever-ready debate—who rendered invaluable service to local and to national Voluntaryism at every turn and stage of the great controversy, and who still adheres to his old views, with deeper impressions of their soundness and equity, and of their incalculable importance in the existing crisis, ecclesiastical and political.¹

A few years after the Voluntary movement had begun, and Mr. Thomson had advanced his oral and written pleas against State Churches, Scottish Churchmen took the bold step of demanding from the Legislature an extension of their com-

¹ Mr. Renton is the author of an admirably faithful yet exquisitely beautiful memoir of his mother, who was remarkable not only for all the gifts and graces that can adorn a Christian from girlhood to extreme old age, but for ardent and incessant zeal in every good work, and for unbounded yet wise charity towards the destitute and the reprobate. Unfortunately, this little volume has been printed for merely 'private circulation,' yet it is full of interest for the Christian public at large ; and there seems to be no reason why that public should not be admitted to stand behind the privileged family groups, and contemplate this most attractive and instructive portraiture of a 'mother in Israel.' The new good

paratively humble Establishment, and additional endowments for the Kirk. The existing monopoly was unjust enough ; and for those who made a rather weak defence of it against their Dissenting neighbours, when these called for its total withdrawal, it was certainly a bold expedient to insist upon new grants. At the time when Dissenters were complaining of their political and social disqualifications, Churchmen came forward to urge that these should be greatly increased as well as confirmed. They could, indeed, allege that there was a fearful amount of godlessness and ignorance in the land, and also that there had sprung up within the Established Kirk a new zeal for dealing with the surrounding spiritual destitution. Yet the fact that for more than a century the Establishment had confessedly been a poor engine for preventing or removing that destitution which it allowed to grow up and multiply in the immediate neighbourhood of its churches, was a strong reason why other instrumentality should be tried, instead of further extending and endowing that old Establishment. Of late, too, Christians had realized the condition of the whole pagan world, and felt that they were bound to labour for its enlightenment and conversion ; yet they had not gone to the Government and demanded that the *British and Foreign Bible Society* and the *Missionary Society* should be connected with the State, and supported, either in whole or in part, by *endowments*. Still these societies, depending solely on the free-will offerings of the religious public, had been gloriously

that she would thereby accomplish upon a greatly enlarged scale, ought to be an irresistible argument, in the son's view, for consenting to its unrestricted publication. Dr. Thomson intimately knew and highly esteemed this admirable lady. It is not the least of the glories of the Secession that it has reared many a noble 'elect lady,' whose character and influence radiated far beyond family circles, and blessed a large section of the denomination. May the writer be permitted to name, as another remarkable lady who abounded in evangelical zeal and charity, yet never lost her delicate womanliness—the late Mrs. Millar, wife of the Rev. James Millar of Huntly?

successful. Why, then, should not Scottish Churchmen have looked to the same quarter when pursuing the incomparably smaller enterprise of supplying what was defective in the means for evangelizing the little kingdom of Scotland? Curiously enough, the advocates of 'Church Extension,' who besieged Government for endowments to new churches in destitute localities, have subsequently proved what magnificent yet permanent results can attend an appeal to Voluntaryism. Many hundreds of churches for town and country all over Scotland, and in the Highlands as well as the Lowlands—displaying the full equipment of manses, schools, and theological colleges, and producing 'Sustentation Funds' for their ministers, teachers, and professors, along with noble contributions both to home and to foreign missions—have been got out of Voluntaryism by the men who but recently could not trust it for the decent maintenance of a few chapels-of-ease.

There were various designs in the Church Extension scheme which Voluntaries then had good reason to mark, and which, as strangely modified by an all-shaping providence, they may now contemplate with astonishment and gratitude.

Against the Church Extensionists Dissenters bestirred themselves with alacrity and zeal, following them both before the people and before the Parliament and Government. Mr. Thomson had a prominent part in pursuing Churchmen to the two tribunals: he delivered many speeches and lectures in immediate reply to those that had been given by Chalmers and others; and he repeatedly went up to London to hold interviews with those members of the Legislature and of the Cabinet who had come under Chalmers' strong solicitations. He was associated with other eminently oratorical and diplomatic brethren in those engagements. We have often heard him say, that of all—whether clergymen or laymen—who went with him as co-deputies to London, and held interviews with ministers of the Crown and leading senators, the most skilful

and adroit in introducing and explaining their case, and in disposing of the antagonistic views which had been recently urged upon the same hearers by Church deputations, was Dr. Harper of Leith. At that time, however, Dissenters could not hope to convert statesmen to pure Voluntarism, which seemed to be a novel and vulgar principle ; but they could, and they did, impress them with the flagrant inexpediency and injustice of granting, in existing circumstances, additional endowments to the Scottish Kirk.

One of the tours of agitation which Mr. Thomson made against Church Extension was in the 'kingdom of Fife ;' and there he was associated with Dr. Beattie of Glasgow (a most genial companion, and a remarkably effective speaker ; his rich and inexhaustible humour being under the wisest control, and employed as a mere auxiliary to his logic) in visiting and addressing audiences in all parts of the county. The services of the two had been specially solicited by the local Presbytery, as is shown by the under-quoted letter to *Dr. Thomson* from the Rev. Dr. John Taylor, then of Auchtermuchty,—a man of rare and varied powers of intellect, and of vast acquirements in literature, science, and theology, which would have enabled him, but for his own unconquerable modesty, to fill the highest posts in our church that were open to great preachers and to learned professors. This admirable man was the leader of the Fifeshire Voluntaries ; and in inviting the Border champion, who had recently (in 1838) received the degree of D.D. from the College of Miami, Oxford, Ohio, he warmly congratulates his friend on the attainment of the well-merited honour.¹

It is told of Mr. Jay of Bath, that though the degree of D.D.

¹ '6th November 1838.

'Our Presbytery (Cupar) appointed a committee, of which I am convener, to negotiate with you and Dr. Beattie respecting *agitation* within our bounds. We are of opinion that, instead of writing to both the deputies, it is better

had been conferred upon him, he never wore the honour in public, except on his *travelling trunk*; and that he was struck with the extra care which porters took of a doctor's luggage, and the extra respect which coachmen showed to a doctor's person; whereas, had the degree been flourished on the title-page of any volume of his, critics would not have handled the book with more of tenderness or awe. We are not aware that *Dr. Thomson*, in travelling, found Scotch coachmen and porters more obsequious and polite, or that, in speaking, he met with audiences more attentive and ready to be persuaded. He fully deserved, yet he did not at all need, the distinction; and he wore it with very moderate elation. The members of

to leave you to arrange with one another. I have therefore to beg of you to let us know when it will be convenient for you to come to the east of Fife, how long you can remain with us, and generally, how you judge it proper to proceed. May we expect both you and *Dr. Beattie*? If so, do you intend to visit places singly or in company? You know what congregations we have in Fife; and I dare say a meeting might easily be got in almost every one of our churches. I fear it would be too much to ask that from you; and we shall, if you wish it, make a selection. In doing this, we must be guided by circumstances, especially by the length of time you may be willing to devote to us. Our Presbytery meets at Cupar on the Tuesday before the first Sabbath of December, and I am sure we shall all be glad to have you present. The arrangements, however, could be made, in part at least, before that time. The meetings could not be advantageously held except in the evenings; and moonlight would be a very valuable auxiliary. The Extensionists are still very busy hereabout. But at Strathmiglo, on Thursday last, we completely swamped their meeting. We elected a Voluntary chairman; and after giving three cheers for *separation*, forced them to retire, when we passed an anti-endowment resolution.

'Allow me to congratulate you on your elevation AD APICEM DOCTORATUS, as the diplomas phrase it. I think *Dr. Adam Smith* has a remark somewhat to the effect, that he is the happiest man whose honours come late—not till it is universally allowed that they are due; for then they excite no vanity in his own mind, and no jealousy or envy in the minds of others. Surely university reform is clamantly demanded, when our own colleges are leaving what is so manifestly their proper work to be performed by institutions among the backwoodsmen of America. I am on my way to Aberdeen.—With kind regards to Mrs. Thomson, I am, yours faithfully,

'J. TAYLOR.

'The Rev. Dr. THOMSON, Coldstream.'

his own Presbytery congratulated him as the first of their number who had gained the honour ; and he expressed himself as more delighted with their satisfaction at and acquiescence in the title, than with the title itself.

University honours are designed not only to recognise and reward past performances, but to incite to other and greater achievements in the future. Dr. Thomson's most valuable productions appeared after the date of his diploma ; but we cannot doubt that they would have come forth quite as early, and been of equal merit, even though that diploma had been delayed or altogether withheld. His volume entitled *Consolation for Christian Mourners* has gone through three editions ; yet this is the least emphatic certificate to its general ability and special influence. The author was repeatedly thanked, by representatives of all classes of the bereaved, for the soothing and the healing application of gospel truth which he had made to their stricken souls ; and any of those simple expressions of gratitude he both liked and valued infinitely more than an eloquently eulogistic critique. He had not only laboured with all his care and tenderness to comfort *Christian* mourners who had lost their nearest relatives, and to bring the whole system of revealed truth about a Triune God of Love to bend down to them with its sympathy, help, and peace, but he also sought to deal with the many *Christless* mourners, and to lead them to be conscious of a far more melancholy void in their souls than could be caused by the death of any or all of their friends, and to commit these souls to Jesus Christ for eternal salvation as well as for occasional solace. He administered the consolations of the gospel to afflicted believers, but he did not turn away from the forlorn grief of unbelievers ; for he knew that, in these, grief might be blessed to produce 'faith and repentance,' leading them to look from some earthly friend whom they had lost to the Divine Saviour whom their sins had 'pierced,' and to have

their hearts broken with godly contrition as well as with mortal anguish. He knew that bereaved men and women often take up a religious book, that meditates on the death of friends, to find in it some alleviation for their grief, though they had never once looked into its pages for the way of salvation ; and he was anxious that they should never, however slightly, consult his volume, without meeting with impressive statements of the cardinal truths of the gospel, and urgent calls to become Christians ; so that, having received the primary blessing of the Redeemer's mission—‘the opening of the prison-doors to them that are bound’—they should also share in his secondary design, ‘to bind up the broken-hearted, and comfort them that mourn.’ The volume is thus alike comprehensive and definite : it deals with all classes of mourners, according to their peculiar bereavements, whether they be orphans or childless, sisterless or brotherless, widows or widowers, whether their ‘own familiar friend’ has been ‘put into darkness,’ or they are exclaiming over the removal of a godly pastor, ‘My father, my father ! the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof !’ and it also deals with mourners under the two great divisions—the *Christian* and the *Christless* mourners.

About the same time his *Outlines for the Pulpit* appeared,—a volume consisting of *sixty* ‘short illustrations of select texts for evangelical discourses.’ These were taken from among the *skeleton sermons* which he had prepared for his own pulpit during the greater part of his ministry, when, after carefully studying his subjects, he traced outlines of the thinking he should pursue, and trusted to find, in the moment of delivery, fit and fervent expression for his ideas, and an amplification of his illustrations, as well as a considerable addition both of new ideas and of new illustrations. A discourse, as he wrote and afterwards printed it, could be read aloud in six or seven minutes ; yet what was given in this condensed form not only permitted, but for popular effect needed, expansion into the

standard measure of forty or fifty minutes. In his own case, the expansion was a growth and multiplication of thoughts, and not a process of hammering or blowing out the same thoughts to cover an extended space. More than one series of 'skeleton sermons' had been published in England; but in Scotland, Dr. Thomson's volume was the first of the kind. Each discourse had a distinct and felicitous title, announcing the subject to be discussed; and the text stood out as a mirror, and not a motto, for it. He could have done as much to every sermon he preached, for he never chose a text unless he saw and could define its exact meaning and scope. In those households where the reading aloud of one of the discourses has been associated with the exercise of family worship on a Sabbath morning or evening, the volume is greatly liked; and the opening of it does not fill the minds of juvenile members with the fear of a dull and tedious infliction. To the sick and their attendants in 'the dwellings of Jacob' it has often spoken precious 'peace,' the brevity of each sermon preventing weariness; and the simple, unexpanded, and undressed way in which the ideas come forward, and quickly succeed each other, has the charm of easy yet most instructive conversation. Rhetoric and declamation are not for a sick-room, where their pomp and march would be alike vain and oppressive; and even the mere expansion common or proper to public discourses would be inadmissible.

What the volume's usefulness may have been in supplying *ministers* with 'outlines for the pulpit,' we cannot say particularly. We rather think that ministers should have both the ability and the inclination to make *their own* 'outlines for the pulpit,' and to stand always in these, as young Samuel Johnson would stand in his own 'shoes,' however tattered. Many would regard such a use of the book as an aid to laziness, or a mask for incapacity; yet, after the charges of plagiarism which one frequently hears against several very popular and accomplished

preachers, it might be supposed that the standard of independence, honesty, and honour is on this point far from high. Certainly it would be better to legalize a free use of 'outlines,' than to wink at the appropriation of long passages and whole sermons by ministers who could produce something of their own highly respectable, though much less brilliant than the piece stolen. It is indeed probable that the discourses plagiarized are incomparably superior to any native product of the preacher's ; but whilst this might furnish a strong reason for congregations being urged to read those discourses, it can offer no excuse for preachers delivering them as their own compositions. Nor can this clerical 'kleptomania' be defended on the ground that the ministers charged with it have such a memory, that whatever they read or hear with keen interest passes *verbatim* into their mental stores, to be retained, and, alas, confounded with their own ideas and compositions, and to be reproduced at any time as their own, quite unwittingly and innocently ; for how is it, that with such a memory they forget the *authors* of the sermons read, or at least fail to remember that the sermons had been written and published by others than themselves ? The late Dr. James Peddie is said to have addressed a clerical brother who had just accomplished the feat of delivering a discourse that was the published work of somebody else : 'Sir, you keep the Sabbath most strictly : you do not *think your own thoughts, or speak your own words* on this sacred day.' It is strange that there should be in every age several such *Sabbatarians*, who, though perfectly able to write excellent sermons, are tempted to appropriate, without any acknowledgment (even in their manuscript), the splendid or striking passages of others. We believe, however, that charges of plagiarism against some preachers have been whispered in circles, and then more openly and widely circulated, on utterly insufficient grounds ; and a few unconscious coincidences of thought and phrase on one occasion, or the adoption

of an extremely obvious 'division,' which for the same reason had recommended itself to a previous preacher, of whom the other was ignorant, may have been magnified into the wilful enormity of habitual literary theft. It is infamous to originate or to take part in spreading abroad such charges, unless upon clear and unequivocal evidence that the offence itself, and not something like it, has been committed. Thousands of sermons may be without a single original idea, and may have no feature of individuality, but would fit anybody as their author; yet who would identify this persistent commonplace with literary plagiarism? Nobody in particular claims the former, and all may share in it without blame.¹

Dr. Thomson pursued his energetic advocacy of Voluntarism, and laboured and fought for it beside such champions as Drs. Peddie, Brown, Ritchie, and Alexander, of Edinburgh; Drs. Wardlaw, Heugh, King, and Anderson, of Glasgow; Drs. Marshall, Balmer, Stark (Dennyloanhead), Henderson (Gala-shiels), and Young (Perth). He had, indeed, a more rural station than that which the most of those brethren occupied; yet his vigilance and promptitude enabled him to overcome disadvantages, to emerge from his Border watch-tower, and to appear on the scene of action quite as early as those who were nearest it. Exercising his ministry in a small town on the Borders, he yet, in reference to all movements bearing upon the interests of religion or of his own denomination, displayed more than metropolitan intelligence and activity.

The Non-intrusion agitation, however, within the Church of

¹ Many of the sermons that form *The Outlines for the Pulpit* had been written in *shorthand*; and in transcribing them for the press, Dr. Thomson was assisted by a student in his congregation, Mr. William Kiddy, who was afterwards ordained as minister of the United Presbyterian Church at Lilliesleaf, where his very able, zealous, and acceptable ministry was prematurely closed by a sudden death. Mr. Kiddy had a vast collection of anecdotes illustrative of the Berwickshire clergy, including his own minister, and could tell them admirably.

Scotland began to engross public attention, and a pause in the Voluntary conflict ensued, the mere course of ecclesiastical events promising to carry forward the issues of that conflict far more completely and rapidly than the most vigorous polemics could do. Nor was providence misinterpreted in this ; and the progress of Voluntaryism during the truce has been marvellous, though quiet. But Dr. Thomson was not destined to exchange his zealous advocacy of civil and religious liberty for the easy attitude of a mere spectator. He did not hang up his weapons and become an onlooker of other heroes daring and doing nobly, for he soon found himself committed to a cause which long engaged all his energy and devotedness.

How he was led to enter upon and maintain those arduous labours for the abolition of the BIBLE MONOPOLY, which have yielded incalculable advantages, and entitled him to the grateful remembrance of posterity, will be told in a separate chapter. The cause of free and cheap Bible-circulation he advocated chiefly by a most extensive correspondence and oral addresses in the principal towns of England and Scotland ; but he also contributed to it as many pamphlets as would form a large volume, and these were unquestionably among the ablest of his publications.

CHAPTER V.

HIS ATTENTION TO CHURCH-COURT BUSINESS, ETC.

(1806-1851.)



R. THOMSON was most punctual in attending the various Church courts with which Presbyterianism is equipped ; and at all the meetings of his session, Presbytery, and Synod, he was present, unless for an insuperable hindrance. An English reader may conjure up such associations around the idea of 'courts' as will lead him to conceive of a very formal, intermeddling, and despotic procedure, quite unsuited to a meeting of fellow-disciples. Perhaps, if he were told that each of those courts opens every meeting—even that which is held for only a minute, to settle some small point of routine—'in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus, the only Head of His Church,' he would have his apprehensions of something sternly *inquisitorial* in their framework and in their polity rather confirmed. Yet the Coldstream minister's meeting with his elders would almost always have delighted a pious English Congregationalist, and would never have reminded him of a tyrannical or cruel 'consistory.'

Devotional exercises, conducted by two or three elders and by the minister, were followed by a free and earnest consultation about the measures for promoting the piety, peace, prosperity, and spiritual influence of the congregation. Sometimes cases for discipline came before the session, members of

the church appearing to confess themselves guilty of scandalous breaches of morality. These were faithfully yet tenderly dealt with, to maintain the purity of church-fellowship, and to secure the repentance of the erring. In the case of certain sins, which are only minutely inquired into by minds of prurient taste, and which cannot be examined in their details without polluting, the treatment was delicately brief; the minister offering a few words of emphatic rebuke, and the elders silently acquiescing.

Order and harmony characterized all the proceedings of the Coldstream session, and it was perfectly free from wrangling, and from occasional outbursts of contradiction. Yet the moderator was no dictator, for he permitted and desired a free manifestation for the peculiarities of each elder. The country elders regarded their town brethren without jealousy; and both laboured together, along with their minister, for the good of the congregation. His own father was long the session-clerk; and from the beginning of his pastorate, Dr. Thomson was privileged to have a staff of helping elders whom he highly esteemed. Elders of the present day are often described as far more zealous than their predecessors in the discharge of duty, especially to the afflicted; but we doubt if the comparison be true in rural districts, and if Dr. Thomson would have vindicated it, though he was one of the few old men who believed that both the Church and the world were daily improving.

He was invariably present at the *Presbytery* meetings, which, during the greater part of his ministry, were held alternately at Coldstream and at Berwick. Unless when employed on some distant mission, he made all his engagements bend to enable him to join his brethren. Some of these were his guests for the night preceding, and for the night after, the meeting; and students who came to be examined, or to deliver discourses, were always pressed to dine in the manse. When the meeting

was at Berwick, accommodation was readily found in his conveyance for two or three of his brethren ; and the severest and most threatening weather in winter never prevented him from taking the road, though he was often then without a travelling companion. Even in old age he had a fresher and brighter look, and a new exhilaration of spirits, after a long drive through a storm of snow, that had made the highway trackless and nearly deserted, and that would have turned a far younger traveller into a shivering and 'woe-begone' figure. He took a lively interest in all the business brought before the Presbytery, and spoke on it with no less of sagacity and judgment than of ease and animation.

The superintendence of those students who aspire to the ministry, he held to be an important duty of the Presbytery ; and he never was satisfied with the small corner into which the discharge of that duty was generally thrust. He did not think that it was 'constitutional' for Presbyteries to hand over their own functions and responsibilities to a General Board of Examiners, who only proposed to inquire into and test *one class* of qualifications in students, and that class not the most important ;—whereas it was incumbent on Presbyteries to make a more comprehensive examination. The Board deals with scholastic acquirements alone, and by means of paper-queries ascertains whether or not the young men are sufficiently 'crammed ;' but important as scholarship is, there is the higher question of *intellectual capacity and energy*. Yet the Board declines to intermeddle with this, or to ascertain the mental growth and 'weight' of each student, or even to ask what his scholarship has contributed to these ! Dr. Thomson believed that, by full and strict oral examinations, Presbyteries could not only test a student's scholarship quite as well as could any Board, but also give it a stronger stimulus than by the paper machinery ; whilst, in reference to that student's general intellectual powers, and their development

and exercise, Presbyteries had ample means and opportunities for ascertaining and directing these ; but no Board proposed to undertake this latter charge. Nor did the Doctor think that Presbyteries had a light task in attending to the spiritual training of those who looked forward to the ministry. In short, he placed presbyterial superintendence of students on a level with Divinity Hall tuition.

When students delivered their discourses or exercises before the Presbytery, he was always a candid critic, scrupulously refraining from severities that had no other tendency than to wound their feelings. He had no ridicule for youthful exuberance of fancy—no sneering at luxuriant diction, as ‘foliage without fruit ;’ and all his sharp censure was reserved for displays of gross affectation or of presumptuous conceit. These he found the will, as he had the power, to lash ; and when the Border Presbytery was thrown into amazement and disgust at the airs of more than apostolic knowledge of divinity, and of more than Demosthenic eloquence, assumed by MR. PETER BORTHWICK, who, as a Secession divinity student, shared not a little of that vast pretentiousness which ballooned him away from the Divinity Hall of the Secession into the august sphere of the Imperial Parliament, Dr. Thomson, to whose congregation he for a time belonged, did not seek to defend him against the unfavourable judgment which all the other members of Presbytery had pronounced upon the strange performance, or against the contempt expressed by several for the lofty self-confidence of the student’s spirit and manner, but increased the punishment by saying, that from all that he had previously observed in the young man, he was not prepared for that day’s very singular exhibition,—though Mr. Borthwick’s subsequent insensibility, when baited by the scorn of the whole House of Commons, and blackened by the ink of the English press, amidst the laughter of the country, leads us to suppose that, after the stripes of the Berwick and Coldstream Pres-

bytery, he did not need to 'go into hospital,' nor had the thick skin of his vanity in the least broken.¹

Such a demonstration, however, as Mr. Borthwick's was, for confidence and arrogance, without a parallel ; and in almost all his presbyterial criticisms Dr. Thomson gave students the kindest encouragement, remembering that some slight phrase of ridicule which might pass from his lips, to be forgotten

¹ This Peter Borthwick demands a volume rather than a note, though complete oblivion would be the kinder treatment. Who he was for the first half of his life, was known to many besides Dr. Thomson in the Secession Church ; but during the second half of his life he absolutely repudiated his former identity : he neither knew nor would have anything to do with that preceding Peter Borthwick, who was not even a poor relation. Peter Borthwick, the student, was born of honest parents in the peasant rank ; but Peter Borthwick, *Esq.*, the pro-slavery lecturer and the M.P., had sprung from a high family, and been cradled and reared in a castle, though nobody had ever seen the gentle boy ! In the Divinity Hall of the Secession he was not disliked by his fellow-students ; for, with all his self-conceit, he had a plausible and insinuating address. At meetings of students' societies he had neither a larger stock nor a better kind of ideas than his companions, but he could express them more fluently and elegantly. On the occasion of the students presenting their Professor, Dr. Dick, with a portrait of himself, they chose Borthwick to be their spokesman ; and he got through the task well, though, with characteristic pretentiousness, he descanted learnedly on the fine arts, of which he knew nothing, and looked unabashed on the finely cut features and icy-keen expression of the Professor's face, which told him plainly to cut short his showy nonsense. When he was within the bounds of the Coldstream and Berwick Presbytery, he paid his addresses to a young lady who was under Dr. Thomson's guardianship. The Doctor thought it right to warn Miss C. of the imprudence of entering into a fixed engagement with a student ; and the student promptly called on the Doctor to express his gratitude for the interest which the latter had taken in the well-being of his betrothed, and proceeded to give a brilliant fancy sketch of such 'ways and means' at his command as would have warranted not only an engagement, but an immediate marriage. [The lady afterwards became his wife.] Before entering on his public career he kept a book-shop in Dalkeith ; and the shop sign-board, which was of the large dimensions and the staring colours that are liked in small towns, was retained by an antiquary long after Mr. Borthwick's card had M.P. on it. We need not tell how he was laid hold of by a wealthy party interested in the support of slaveholding. Peter Borthwick, *Esq.*, came forward to lecture to fashionable audiences in the principal cities on behalf of slavery, and to denounce all that was being done for

by himself the next moment, would probably rankle long in the sensitive nature of a student, and dishearten as well as wound.

Whilst Dr. Thomson was among the foremost in recommending improvements, though these should supersede ancient forms and practices that had through association become dear and venerable, yet, whenever he saw earnest opposition offered

negro emancipation. Nobody would wish to see a better man hired to whitewash the horrible abomination. An old Divinity Hall companion went to one of the lectures. The orator entered, his former friend at once recognising him, in spite of the superfine elegance of his dress and his manners. He was attended by his valet, who carried his portfolio of manuscript, and soon exchanged this for his master's gloves. For the first few minutes of his lecture he did not lay aside a magnificent Spanish cloak, which was skilfully arranged for graceful oratory; but before entering on a passage of animated eloquence, he gave a signal, and the valet removed the cloak with as delicate a reverence as if from the shoulders of lady fair, and then showed Peter succinct for the battle against Emancipation! His old fellow-student afterwards called upon the lecturer at his hotel; but when he mentioned his name, along with the scene and circumstances of their former intimacy, Mr. Borthwick did not know—had, indeed, never known—any person of that name,—had never been a divinity student,—had never once heard of the Secession Church or its Divinity Hall, and did not care to be then told! What was the stranger's motive for intruding with such a preposterous mistake or wilful imposition? The visitor was astounded at the audacious yet mean repudiation, but replied with emphasis, 'Since, Mr. Peter Borthwick, you are pleased not to know yourself, I cannot wonder that you don't know me, an old companion,' and withdrew. Mr. Borthwick got into Parliament, where he was on the side of ultra-Toryism and High Churchism; but he had neither influence nor respect with any party, and was described by Carlyle as tossed from side to side like a 'dead cat.' Dr. Thomson saw him repeatedly in or about the House of Commons; and when their eyes met, the Doctor greeted him with a contemptuous shake of the head. After Mr. Borthwick's death, the London daily of which he had been editor issued such a memoir as the living Peter, in his most vainglorious and fable-composing mood, would have indited. 'Peter's ghost must have written it,' exclaimed some Scottish readers, forgetting that even his ghost might have been disciplined into a little veracity, and would not surely have repeated the story of his high birth and his infancy in a castle. Of course, the *Morning Post* said nothing of the high-born youth's connection with such a plebeian institution as the Secession Church or its Divinity Hall.

even by a minority, he urged forbearance and delay on the part of his fellow-innovators. Only a few members in his congregation, or only a few congregations in the Synod, might dislike the adoption of some proposed change, and they might have no better reasons than prejudice and bigotry, yet he was resolute against carrying out the change until it was welcome to all, or at least until it had ceased to aggrieve the weak conscience of any ; and thus he was wisely conservative in his method of advancing reform. From the first time that he was in London, and heard the hymns of Watts sung by Dissenting congregations, he had no doubt as to the complete lawfulness and the signal advantage of using such compositions, not only in private or in family, but also in congregational worship ; and he was eager to see Scotch Seceders fully availing themselves of liberty of worship, instead of injuriously confining themselves to the psalmody of the Jewish temple and economy, with its few and indirect praises for the Redeemer of the world, and with its ‘songs for the night’ of long and dreary watching : whereas, along with the introduction of the Christian dispensation, the ‘day-star arose from on high,’ the ‘morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy ;’ the children cried, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David ;’ and ‘out of the mouth of babes and sucklings’ proceeded such pure evangelical melody as David never breathed forth : for if these little ones had been silent from Jewish reticence, the ‘very stones’ would have become vocal on the coming and during the continuance of Christ’s day. But he knew that Scotland was far from ready for such a Christian liberty in praise as she had long taken and enjoyed in prayer, even though there was the *Lord’s Prayer* that might as an inimitable model have fettered her supplications ; whilst there was no *Lord’s Song*, nothing less ancient and less Jewish than Psalms of David, to mould her celebrations. In all the congregations both of the Secession and of the Establishment, there were several strongly opposed to the introduction

of the finest hymns of Watts; and there would have been clerical members of the Synod prepared to denounce that attempt as wholly inexpedient, if not profane.

To United Presbyterians, who have been for several years familiar with the congregational use of a volume of hymns that has been made extravagantly bulky, as if the absence of selectness both in quantity and quality would ensure the proper freedom, and as if the finding of a perfectly new hymn for every successive occasion were the most precious privilege, it may be interesting to know that Burgher Seceders, at a period so recent as 1811, had much keen disputing as to whether the psalms alone should be sung in public worship, or whether any of the pieces in the very small collection of 'paraphrases' sanctioned by the Church of Scotland might not be occasionally added; and that the Antiburgher Seceders were then more quiet about the subject, not because they had settled, but because they had scarcely started, the controversy. Dr. Thomson, whilst delighting in the psalms (for at family worship in the morning he sang from the psalms, going through them in regular order, and in the evening he did the same with the paraphrases¹), admitted the lawfulness and even the necessity of a service of praise that was more directly and broadly Christian. Still, when so many ministers, and a larger number of members in every congregation denounced the addition, he held that the apostolic precept about conceding to weak brethren forbade its immediate and universal adoption.

In some cases, when a 'paraphrase' had been read out from the pulpit as the *concluding* service of praise (for no minister ever ventured to give it as the *opening*; and down to our day there is an invariable prejudice against anything but a psalm for the first service of praise at every meeting), the aggrieved 'sticklers' for the psalms refused to join in the singing of the

¹ When singing from the psalms he read a chapter from the New Testament, and when singing from the paraphrases, a chapter of the Old.

‘man-made stuff.’ Some left their books unopened on the board, and laid down their faces out of sight beside these shut books, to intimate that they had no ‘part or lot’ in the business, but would be suspected rather of sleeping than of singing paraphrases ; and others, who were bolder spirits, began to sit erect, their faces wearing an expression of keen dissatisfaction and censure, which did not disappear when, having taken up their Bibles, they proceeded to select a PSALM to be conned or ‘crooned’ over ; and—that neighbours might see plainly that it *was* a psalm—they preferred the prose version in the middle of the sacred volume ; and there they sat bravely in the breach, defending and adhering closely to DAVID, though the great majority, as well as ‘Ahithophel’ in the pulpit, had deserted the royal Psalmist, and were enthusiastically following *Absalom* for his beauty and long locks—a paraphrase for its fine rhymes and fascinating language ! Occasionally, too, some elderly champion, bolder still in his indignation, resolved to be beyond hearing of the ‘abomination,’ and to quit the church for that day ; and in making his *exit*, he marched along the passage with heavy steps of protest, and with his hat already placed on his head (for might he not wear his hat in a church that was being desecrated by the singing of a paraphrase ?), whilst the way in which he opened and shut the door startled the pews and the pulpit. In some cases, in which both minister and people were equally zealous for the psalms, a simple but effectual precaution was taken to restrain any occasional occupants of the pulpit from straying into the forbidden paraphrases : the collection of these had been withdrawn from the pulpit psalm-book ; and even though this measure had been overlooked, sometimes the precentor was a man who would not scruple, when the stranger in the pulpit had read out a paraphrase, such as the plaintive one,

‘Few are thy days, and full of woe,
O man, of woman born !’ etc.,

to rise and sing a psalm, such as,

‘A man was famous, and was held
In estimation!’

The precentors of that period were without a salary, and often without any musical faculty; but not a few of them had a will of their own, and were, in more senses than one, the ‘leaders’ of the congregation. Several belonged to the eldership, and would not have liked to be regarded as ‘servants’ of the people.

In 1811 the subject of psalmody was brought before the Associate Synod, which appointed a committee to ‘prepare a suitable addition of scriptural songs to be used in public worship.’ We cannot say whether the committee represented poetic taste as well as devotional fervour; and it seems doubtful whether the members were expected to compose or merely to select hymns. After due deliberation, however, they concluded that either task, if not above their powers, was beyond the requirements of the time, and the Synod allowed the ‘translations’ published by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to be used in all the Secession congregations, though there must have been a general conviction that many pieces in the collection were purely descriptive or sentimental, and lacked the elements of Christian adoration and thanksgiving.

Curiously enough, the liberalizing movement in psalmody began in the Established Church of Scotland. In 1745 a collection of ‘paraphrases’ was sanctioned by an Act of General Assembly for use in public worship; and in 1781 it was revised and enlarged, and another Assembly Act appointed it to be used in all congregations. The earliest movement among Seceders was in 1747, when the Synod recommended to ‘Mr. Ralph Erskine the work of turning Scripture passages of praise into *metre*’ for congregational use; but nothing was done until, in 1812, the Synod simply permitted the Church

of Scotland collection to be employed in all congregations of the Secession.

This psalmody question was keenly discussed in congregations, sessions, and presbyteries ; and if ministers had not uniformly spoken and acted with great discretion and forbearance, discord would have broken out among their people. Even the trivial point, as to whether the ancient and long-continued practice of the precentor reading aloud the lines of the psalm immediately before singing them should be given up or not, occasioned much disputation, which was frequently of a very acrimonious kind. The practice had been introduced out of consideration for such persons as were supposed to be incapable of reading, or to be without books, especially large-printed books which age-weakened eyes could read (for many decent folks had a strange dislike against taking their *spectacles* to church). It might be useful in olden times of greater ignorance and greater scarcity of books ; but when all the worshippers could read, and had books, the precentor's elocution, which was often less attractive than his singing, might be spared. In the Burgher Secession the precentor read two lines at a time ; but in the Antiburgher only a single line, and the latter division not seldom destroyed the meaning of such a psalm as the 50th : ' Our God shall come, and shall no more,'—an intimation sufficiently obscure ; but what could be made of the next line standing alone, ' Be silent, but speak out ! ' Few intelligent hearers could like the style—sometimes grossly illiterate, sometimes affectedly fine—in which precentors recited the lines. Generally, towards the close of a line, the reading glided into a sort of chanting, which was meant to pass beautifully into the singing ; but the effect did not quite correspond with the design. When the various grounds for the practice had become obsolete, its discontinuance was urged ; but it drew forth a resistance which was almost as vehement as if the proposal had involved the aboli-

tion of singing itself. Reading was declared by many to be, if not strictly necessary, yet highly ornamental. A favourite argument with some was that, without reading the line, the service of praise would go on at an irreverently rapid pace. Dr. Thomson was strongly in favour of the change ; but he saw that, like the supplementing of the psalmody, it must be considerably and gradually introduced. Such questions regarding public worship were but seldom and slightly before the Synod ; yet they had long a prominent place in the discussions of congregations, sessions, and presbyteries ; and if they had not been wisely managed in these, they would have forced themselves disagreeably and mischievously upon the attention of the Supreme Court. The policy which the Doctor pursued, and which he recommended to his brethren, was occasionally to give the congregation an opportunity of *trying the change*, and thus to allow their own unexpected experience to remove slowly and quietly the objections of its former opponents. When these had heard, at intervals, a psalm sung without the reading of the line, they began to think that praise in this style was far more impressive and not less intelligible ; and from wishing to have it more frequently, they soon came to prefer it uniformly. And so with the introduction of paraphrases : one of these, beautifully appropriate to a discourse which he had just delivered to the Sabbath school children in the presence of the congregation, he read out and sang (for often when preaching to children he acted as his own precentor), and the extreme animation with which both young and old engaged in the service, and poured forth the melodious, poetic, and devotional strains, did more to reconcile the ‘sticklers’ for the psalms to the use of hymns than any amount of discussion could have effected.

He was an earnest advocate of the union which was in 1820 happily accomplished between his own branch of the Secession, known as the *Burghers*, and the other known as the *Anti-*

burghers. During the long period of their separation, both had increased and prospered almost equally ; and it would have been impossible to say which of the two, from the number, size, and character of its congregations, and the ability and influence of its ministers, had any degree of superiority. They were singularly well matched ; and now that the subject of dispute which had rent them in twain nearly three-quarters of a century before was taken out of the way, there was nothing to forbid the joyful reunion. In the Border district, however, the *Burghers* had been much stronger than the *Antiburghers*, having a greater number of congregations, and these of larger membership, just as in some northern or western province the preponderance was exactly reversed ; still the comparatively few and small *Antiburgher* congregations of the *Merse* were presided over by excellent ministers, whom Dr. Thomson was proud to receive as brethren, and who were quite worthy to have had such leaders as Drs. Mitchell, Heugh, and Jamieson. Until the union negotiations were near a successful termination, he and the other *Burgher* ministers of the *Merse* had never exchanged pulpits with their *Antiburgher* brethren, and knew nothing about the preaching power of these individually, except through the doubtful criticism of public rumour. But intercourse soon enabled the neighbours to know and appreciate each other. Messrs. Stark of Ayton, Young of Berwick, Thomson of Dunse, Inglis of Greenlaw, and Young of Norham, were welcome additions to the circle of friends with whom Dr. Thomson exchanged ministerial services, and with whom he was wont to meet once a month in presbytery, as well as more frequently, though less regularly, in their or in his own manse ; and there was no degree of *less* and *more* cordiality to mark the attentions which he paid to *Burgher* and *Antiburgher* brethren. Without abandoning old friends, he associated as much and as closely with the new ; and he often gave his congregation the opportunity of being edified by the latter, who

were men of sterling rather than of showy abilities. His namesake, Mr. Thomson of Dunse, had the commanding person and the straightforward and decisive manners of a colonel in the army ; and his preaching conveyed pithy and direct ideas in simple language. His delivery was marked, perhaps a little marred, by an inarticulate sound—a guttural ‘hem,’ which occurred after every clause, and seemed to be a clearing away of all vocal obstructions for the clause that was to follow. He wasted no words, though in announcing his text he invariably added, ‘as the Lord may be pleased to pity and direct.’ Mr. Inglis had a diffidence amounting to self-depreciation, and this went far to suppress the exercise of those high faculties which nobody that observed his noble forehead and remarkably bright eyes could fail to ascribe to him ; and it was only on rare occasions in public that he rose above the embarrassments of extreme modesty into a self-possessed mood, and poured forth strains of impassioned eloquence ; still his general preaching was interesting and instructive. The estimable Mr. Young of Norham had a peculiarly grave and methodical appearance, wearing his hair carefully powdered, and showing quite as uniform an expression of features. His eyes—more like fixed stars than planets—scarcely moved, whilst his sonorous voice came forth slowly and with little inflexion ; yet the voice drew and retained the attention of all hearers, and these were well rewarded by the instructions communicated so deliberately and emphatically. Our earliest recollection of him is in connection with a text from which he preached on a sacramental Sabbath evening at Greenlaw. The text was the question which the rather ungrateful Hebrew put to Moses, ‘Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?’—words which came in as a chorus, slowly and solemnly repeated, after every short paragraph of illustration. But what doctrine or moral appropriate to the occasion he thence deduced we have wholly forgotten, and it may puzzle preachers to conjecture. Another of those Anti-

burgher brethren of the Border province, whom Dr. Thomson welcomed as valuable accessions to the circle of friends with whom he exchanged ministerial services, was Mr. Stark, who still, in 1868—his jubilee year—survives, and is indeed the last both of the Burgher and of the Antiburgher ministers who, in 1820, became members of the United Secession Presbytery of Coldstream and Berwick; a man of thorough scholarship and theological culture, who delighted all thoughtful hearers by his clearly expounded, ably defended, and closely yet variously applied views of evangelical truth, though he was deficient in all the externals of oratory, except a very keen and fascinating but benevolent eye.

In the course of a short time after the union all individual peculiarities of the two denominations that had been made one, as well as all distinctions between them, were obliterated; and in none of the Border congregations was Dr. Thomson more acceptable than in those that had been Antiburgher, whose ministers also hailed his presence in their manses with equal cordiality, and became frequent guests in his manse at Coldstream with the consciousness of being entirely at home.

Whilst the movement for this union had been started, and had received its principal directions and impulses at the more central stations, much yet was done in the provinces, chiefly in the way of removing obstructions and difficulties, and in dealing with the still more formidable, though negative, forces of apathy—the *vis inertiae*; and unquestionably, in the Merse, much more was done by Dr. Thomson, who was nobly assisted by Dr. Balmer, than by many brethren who spoke largely in the Synod, and figured in the various Synod committees on the subject.¹ Synod oratory was, at that time, and long after-

¹ Dr. Balmer wrote with admirable force and beauty on union. The essay which he contributed, immediately before his sudden death, to the well-known volume which had leading ministers in all the Scottish churches as its authors, was of high merit; yet, in 1817, he had treated the same

wards, unreported by the newspaper press, and could not enlighten or move the denomination at large, but merely told upon the views and votes of the court itself. Some may judge that the lack of reporting would doom the Synod's eloquence to be quite undeveloped and stunted in its growth, as well as greatly restricted in its range of influence; and that the speakers, deprived of the strong stimulus which the presence of a vast public in the background of the small audience gives, would merely 'talk.' Nor had the Synod cared to have 'field-days of debate;' its single aim being to despatch quickly and quietly its proper business; and this was done in a few sentences of explanation. It had met twice a year, but only for a day or two at each time; and its days were days literally—closing with or before 'elders'' hours,—and never, out of any affected imitation of Parliament's habits, encroaching upon midnight or cock-crow. Since the union, not only of the two branches of the Secession, but also of the Secession with the Relief, Synod oratory has had its opportunities and encouragements, as well as its resources, multiplied in our prosperous Church, and questions of deep interest have ever and anon occurred to engage the Synod's faculties of eloquent exposition and discussion; while reporters, after making an occasional appearance at the scene of debate, and giving a brief summary of the procedure, have at length settled down into the habit of attending each Synod sederunt, to take both a full abstract of all the business and discussions, and a *verbatim* report of the principal speeches; though, in the midst of all those favouring circumstances, a considerable time must yet elapse before we can expect to see any debaters in the United Presbyterian Synod possessing the pre-eminent promptitude, power, and brilliancy of a Dr. Andrew Thomson (St. George's Church), a

subject incidentally, but in a most masterly way, in two lengthy articles in the *Christian Repository*, on Robert Hall's 'Terms of Communion.' This critique we regard as Dr. Balmer's most elaborate and powerful production.

Dr. William Cunningham, a Dr. Robert Buchanan, not to speak of the prince of Scottish debaters, Dr. Candlish, who, at any moment, and for any length of time, could display an unrivalled versatility, nimbleness, subtlety, and vigour of logic, in combination with the boldest and most impassioned rhetoric, and who, during the twenty years in which he, as a debater, eclipsed all opponents and associates, was not less distinguished for the transcendent merit and prodigious amount of his labours both as a platform and as a pulpit orator. From Dr. Candlish's head, which both was and looked a notable one, there could spring at any moment a completely mailed and armed speech to overthrow, in the General Assembly, the host of Moderate lawyers and clergymen ; or a grand oration that should inspire a convocation of ministers, or a vast lay gathering, with the most intense and irrepressible enthusiasm ; or a sublime sermon that thrilled every soul in the audience to its innermost consciousness ;—and all the three achievements have often been nearly simultaneous.

The Secession Church courts kept aloof from the famous Apocrypha dispute.

The circulation of the Apocrypha by the Bible Society was as absurd as would have been the issuing of a counterfeit along with a pure coinage by the Royal Mint, and it had been unanimously condemned in Scotland. But when the directors had repented, and announced their resolution of for ever casting aside the spurious Scriptures, many of the Scottish clergy judged that the indignant censure which had been generally expressed, was punishment sufficient for the offence, and that the high character of the men gave ample security that they would not repeat that offence. Dr. Andrew Thomson, however, was not to be thus satisfied ; and his innumerable speeches and articles of extremely powerful but bitter invective, came *after* the directors had ceased to do evil. His imagination, adopting all kinds of suspicions, brooded so morbidly

over the past offence, that he regarded the London committee, if not beyond the forgiveness, yet beneath the confidence of Scotland ; and began to fear that the London Bible Society itself might have been so far tainted as to be incurable, and to justify the formation of an Edinburgh institution. Those of his Scottish brethren and neighbours who proposed to give the directors a fair trial, received his abundant vituperation ; and Drs. Wardlaw, Brown, and Henry Grey were denounced as encouraging the wicked adulteration of Holy Scripture. We do not know what share the subject of our memoir took in this dispute, though we know what side in it he supported. He was always against the circulation of the Apocrypha by the Bible Society, and against its being bound up in the sacred volume ; but whenever the London directors pledged themselves to see that nothing but the pure word of God should be disseminated by the Society, he accorded to them his full confidence, and believed that the charges subsequently advanced against them were as unjust as they were ungenerous. But whether or not he followed the example of some of his Edinburgh and Glasgow brethren—as supporters of the Bible Society's committee—in making speeches, and publishing letters and pamphlets, we cannot say ; probably his constitutional ardour to join in the controversy was restrained by the consideration that in his own district there had been no attempts to arouse suspicion against the London directors, and that it would be unwise to do anything tending to provoke an importation, into the quiet of rural communities, of such animosities as were raging in Edinburgh.

In 1833, on the death of Dr. Dick, Professor of Systematic Theology in the United Secession Church, Dr. Adam Thomson took a leading part in presbyterial, synodical, and committee deliberations, about greatly enlarging and improving the system of Divinity Hall tuition. Down to 1820, a single Professor had constituted the whole theological faculty, and led students

through their five years' course; but afterwards two were appointed—Drs. Mitchell and Dick; and when the latter died, there was a general conviction that, along with a successor, one or two more Professors should be elected, and that each should have a department in theology for special cultivation. That conviction was deepened and extended by a mere *simile* that occurred in the statement of his views by a member of Synod. 'It took,' he said, 'nine or a dozen men to make a *pin*; but one, or at most two Professors were deemed sufficient to make a Secession minister!' The parsimony appeared flagrant in the light of the simile. Yet why should the simile be applicable to Professors and not to pastors? Nobody would propose that each congregation should have nine or twelve pastors! It was also forgotten that a pin was, from head to point, entirely passive and helpless in the process of its manufacture. Is this true of a student when under training for the ministry? The student himself has, incalculably, the largest share in the work; and if the pin could do as much for its own manufacture, the group of workmen would dwindle away. None of the Professors is expected to give the student a head, as some of the workmen give to the pin; and the head which the student has in entering the Divinity Hall, and which has had its faculties evolved and strengthened by a full course of university studies, should be a very considerable 'factor' in the question of his theological education. Still, apart from the misleading pin-simile, there was ample ground for the conviction that the Hall system ought to be improved by the appointment of a large staff of Professors.

An 'overture' was sent from the Coldstream and Berwick Presbytery, requesting that the Synod, before filling up the professorial vacancy, should consider the whole subject of Hall tuition. The Presbytery gratefully admitted that all the Professors had been eminent for talents, learning, and piety; still they had in succession followed entirely different plans of

teaching, and the Synod might with advantage indicate the general outlines and the special principles of a system to which all Professors should conform. The great improvements which had recently been made on the mode of teaching literature and science, warranted a hope that the same were practicable in the department of theology. The overture also pointed to the wide diversity in the methods, which the various Presbyteries pursued, of superintending and examining their respective students, and suggested that the Synod should issue directions for securing uniformity. The only other document that came up on this important subject from an inferior to the Supreme Court, was a petition from the Fenwick session, entirely and strongly in behalf of a more rigorous economy in the matter of Professors' salaries. It urged, on various grounds, that the 'one hundred pounds' which each Professor received was 'far too large,' and that a reduction should be made with the view of relieving 'students who were in many instances diffculted in getting forward,' 'supporting more liberally superannuated ministers and weak congregations,' and 'sending the gospel to destitute parts of our own country'—grand projects to be all accomplished out of the savings from a hundred pound salary!¹

The Synod, after resolving to delay in the meantime the appointment of a successor to Dr. Dick, remitted to a very large committee the question of Divinity Hall tuition, to consider what should be done, and to bring forward, at the autumn meeting of the Synod, mature and definite proposals. Dr. Thomson was a member of this committee. It was soon judged advisable that the task should be assigned to a small sub-committee, of which Dr. Brown was convener, and Dr. Thomson clerk. It was expressly enjoined upon the members

¹ This petition was virtually successful ; and *four* Professors were maintained at the cost which had been formerly incurred for *two*—the Synod doubling the Professors, and halving their salaries. The shabby remuneration was long continued.

that, when summoned to attend the meetings of the sub-committee, they should prepare to devote two or even three consecutive days to close attendance at those meetings, which began towards the end of May, and were repeatedly held through the summer in the vestry of Broughton Place Church. The convener and the clerk manifested a special zeal, for not only were both invariably present, but they exerted themselves to obtain authentic and minute information about the course of study and the method of instruction followed in the various seminaries—Scottish, English, and American—that were engaged in training candidates for the ministry; and that information was duly laid before the committee, along with many communications from leading members of Synod, containing valuable suggestions. Dr. Brown seems to have made inquiries about Scottish and American institutions and systems, and Dr. Thomson about those in England that belonged to the Independents and the Baptists, and also about the peculiar training which the Scottish Missionary Society gave to those students who were preparing to enter the foreign mission field. In some instances Dr. Thomson had succeeded in eliciting detailed accounts of the English academies, not only from the tutors, trustees, and visitors, but also from the advanced students. As clerk he took minutes, not only of the proposals that were carried, but of the many more that had been dismissed, mentioning briefly their respective reasons. The whole subject seems to have been most anxiously and patiently discussed by the committee. The convener drew up a report of the views and conclusions arrived at; and the admirably written document was sanctioned both by the special and by the general committee, and when submitted to the Synod was substantially adopted. When the three new Professors were elected, Dr. Thomson had the intense satisfaction of finding that two of them were his most intimate friends—Dr. Brown, the convener of the sub-committee, and Dr. Balmer, a co.

member of the Coldstream and Berwick Presbytery, which had sent the overture on Divinity Hall reform. Nor was he less delighted to know how nobly both acquitted themselves as Professors, stimulating as well as instructing and guiding the students, and unconsciously attracting their admiration and affection.

At one period the Synod was led frequently to discuss the relations of the Established Church to the universities and parish schools of Scotland, and to resist the attempts made to render those relations more injurious and galling to Dissenters, —not a single man of whom, though possessing the highest qualifications, could be allowed to teach in school or college. Any proposals to extend education were immediately followed by a demand that the Church monopoly of rule and interest should march alongside. Let new parochial schools and new chairs in universities be introduced, yet none but true sons of the Kirk must be eligible as Professors in the one, or as teachers in the other; and the system was praised as grandly liberal and non-exclusive, because it allowed the admission of dissenting *pupils*. There were rumours abroad that even a Whig Government favoured the design of largely increasing the means both of school and of college education, and of placing them under the control of the Church. Dr. Thomson took a decided part, along with other members of the Synod, in denouncing the injustice and impolicy of such a design; and he corresponded with various members of Parliament who were disposed to plead for unsectarian education. As clerk to a large committee of Synod appointed to consider the ‘Scottish Universities Bill (1836),’ he prepared a series of ‘Resolutions’ which the Synod adopted, and ordered to be widely circulated. The following acknowledgment of his services is taken from a volume on *The Scottish Endowment Question, Ecclesiastical and Educational*, by the Rev. John Skinner, then of Partick: ‘In 1835 a large and influential committee, lay and clerical,

was appointed on the subject of the Scottish universities, and the university education of the candidates for the holy ministry by the United Associate Synod. The manifesto given forth on the subject in the form of "Resolutions," which were widely circulated in the newspapers and periodicals of the day, is known to have created no small degree of salutary speculation. The Rev. Adam Thomson of Coldstream, from whose able and indefatigable pen those "Resolutions" proceeded in the first instance, is known to be thoroughly master of the Royal Commissioners' Report on the Scottish Universities, and has again and again received the thanks of the Synod for the services which he has rendered to the dissenting interest, by his labours and correspondence as clerk to the Synod's University Committee. He could not employ two or three weeks of his valuable time better, than by preparing to present the public with a *digest* of the information embodied in the University Report, accompanied with his own views and reflections on the whole question, as well as with suggestions as to the best mode of the various denominations of Dissenters concerting measures for the protection of their educational interests against the sectarian oppressions of State clergymen and State Professors. He is in the field at this moment, endeavouring to throw light on the subject of legislation anent the educational institutions of the country.'—P. 212.

If the claims of the Established Church on the universities had not met with a successful resistance—a resistance which at length issued in the thorough liberalizing of those national seminaries—there was a strong disposition in the leaders of the various denominations of dissent to urge the organization and equipment of a college that should offer to dissenting aspirants to the ministry the highest classical, scientific, and philosophical education which any university had ever provided; and the withdrawal of all the Scottish dissenting students, along, probably, with many of their English neighbours,

would have made a perceptible blank in the various classrooms of the Art Faculty and in the fees-accounts of the professors, whilst it would have weakened the stimulus which the presence of many fellow-competitors—and these, too, belonging to a rival sect—afforded to the students. The withdrawal would have likewise had its great disadvantages for Dissenting students, in separating these from many groups of coevals and generous competitors in the same intellectual pursuits, and in confining them, during the freely sympathetic and spontaneously expansive season of youth, within the narrow enclosures of their respective sects, where they could form none of those friendships which mitigate the asperity of sectarian polemics. Still those disadvantages must have been endured, as constituting a much smaller evil than the continuance of Dissenters at Church-ridden universities. Now, however, we have got what is undeniably better : the removal of all that is sectarian from the great national seminaries. But in 1836 Dissenters were often compelled to entertain the idea of escaping from wrongs and insults by founding a college of their own. Mr. Skinner of Partick was reasonably hopeful of success for this experiment, but was unnecessarily minute in pointing out the many clerical brethren who were, in his view, splendidly qualified for the chairs in the new college. He announced that, not only in the ranks of ordained ministers, but on the list of ‘probationers,’ there was such a redundant supply, that it might *man* several universities with the most competent and efficient professors ; and he proceeded to nominate some five or six brilliantly-endowed candidates for each single chair. Having shown how easily the professorships could be filled, he was silent about the office of Principal ; and a waggish hint was thrown out from some quarter, that the many brethren whom he had raised to professorships were expected to choose Mr. Skinner himself as Principal !

Dr. Thomson did not quite think, with Mr. Skinner, that so

many of the brethren would adorn the literary, scientific, and philosophical chairs in a university ; but he had long been strongly convinced that at least a sufficient number of candidates could be found, who, though perhaps possessed of much humbler acquirements in the classics, science, and philosophy, had yet far sounder views and better methods for bringing these studies to bear with full profit upon the training of young men for the ministry. He believed that a man like Dr. J. Pye Smith would extract from classical studies a larger amount and a higher kind of the educational utility needed for aspirants to the ministry, than would either a Porson or a Parr ; and that Isaac Taylor or Dr. Chalmers would conduct *philosophical*, as preliminary to *theological*, studies and training more profitably than would a far more profound and original metaphysician, who never looked out from his own sphere into the domain of Christianity. A smaller stock of learning than was possessed by famous university professors might yet, in evangelical hands, be turned to much better account in promoting the training of young men for the ministry ; as had been proved at some of the English Dissenting academies, where, however, the stock of learning was often far too small—smaller than there could be any excuse for in Scotland. Not a little might be advanced on the side of Dr. Thomson's views ; but he and his brethren were determined to exhaust all possible efforts in resisting the exclusiveness which the Church sought to impose on the universities, before resorting to the extreme measure of setting up a college for Dissenters.

Neither on this nor on any question before the Synod was Dr. Thomson often, or long at a time, 'on his legs.' He was satisfied to be silent upon the most exciting topic when any of his brethren had anticipated what he meant to say ; and he was all the more pleased when he had been anticipated by one who spoke seldom. When he rose, it was to advance views which had been overlooked or misrepresented, or to urge the adop-

tion of measures which had not been proposed ; and he then spoke and debated briefly, and with ease and vigour. He had waited in the hope that some one would anticipate his views ; and he was thus, through his patience, fully apprised of the diverse and opposing views which had been brought forward, and could promptly dispose of them. Perhaps, however, his faculty of quick and conclusive reply was more brilliantly, as it was more frequently, displayed in the Presbytery than in the Synod ; his strong sense of the latter court's 'collective wisdom' tending to repress vivacities of expression.

Aware that much of the power of Dissenters to protect their rights and interests in parochial and university education resulted from the REFORM BILL, he was ever ready to eulogize this measure, and to honour the statesmen who had carried it. He had never, indeed, allowed politics, under any disguise or pretext, to have a place in his ministrations ; and during the prodigious popular excitement which surged around the progress of the Bill, and moved the most moderate men to speak recklessly and unseasonably, not a single word about or for the Bill fell from him in the pulpit, though many of the Established clergy of the Merse made themselves notorious for anti-reform sermons and prayers ; harping generally upon the text, 'Meddle not with them that are given to change,' and expounding their political construction of these words with a fervour which was too often absent from their religious lessons. When Earl Grey, on resigning office, and withdrawing, as his burden of years and of labours fully warranted, from public life altogether, was on his way to the Scottish capital to attend a great banquet in honour of his Liberal career and the crowning glories near its close, his lordship, in crossing the Tweed and entering Scotland, received at Coldstream an enthusiastic welcome and ovation from a vast assemblage of Borderers, who had raised for him such a magnificent 'triumphal arch' as would have pleased King Edward himself if he had ever seen it, in token

of Scotland's annexation and allegiance to his sway. What place in this local demonstration was assigned by his fellow-townsmen and neighbours to the subject of our memoir, will appear in the following brief account, which we have abridged from the provincial journals of that date :—

A deputation, consisting of the Rev. A. Thomson, the Rev. J. S. Taylor, and Mr. Thomas Douglas, banker, waited upon Earl Grey at Howick, to request him to receive from the inhabitants of Coldstream an address on his passing through that town towards Edinburgh. His lordship heartily consented. On this being reported to a large meeting of the inhabitants, it was resolved that the Border town should do its best to give the Earl a becoming welcome ; that the inhabitants should walk forth in public procession with flags flying and bands of music to the centre of the bridge, where a triumphal arch should be erected ; and that they should then return in front of the Earl to the Market-place, where a platform was to be erected for the ceremony of delivering an address to his lordship, and of hearing his reply. Dr. Thomson was ‘unanimously’ fixed upon both to write and to read this address ; and various committees were appointed to attend to the rearing of the arch, and the putting of the town into a holiday trim. Though there was but little time for making so many novel arrangements, yet all classes of the Earl's admirers worked with a will, in order that his first steps into Scotland might give him a vivid anticipation of the honours awaiting him along the whole line of progress in the North, and that the scene at Coldstream might be prophetic of the national congratulations. The male population turned out to swell the procession, and many thousands flocked into the town from the surrounding country, to be onlookers, and followed in the wake of the procession, until the triumphal arch on the centre of the bridge was reached ; and there the vast concourse, attended by three bands of music, and under the fluttering of innumerable flags, waited the Earl's approach

from Cornhill. On the crowds obtaining a glimpse of the venerable nobleman, whose name had been so often mentioned during the excitement of the Reform struggle, they raised such acclamations as drowned the 'Welcome, Royal Charlie' of the bands. Afterwards, when in the Market-place Earl Grey stepped from his carriage and ascended the platform, the cheering became prodigious; the final volley being described by a local journalist as so potent, that 'Toryism must have quailed before it.' Dr. Thomson then introduced himself, as entrusted with an address to his lordship from the inhabitants. 'I may,' he proceeded, 'be allowed to say, in the name of the inhabitants of Coldstream, that we congratulate ourselves on having, from our local situation, been the first on this side of the Tweed to offer our tribute of homage to a peer and a statesman so highly distinguished, whether in or out of office, as a true and tried friend to the country of which, for about half a century, he has been one of the brightest ornaments. I shall not detain your lordship longer than to request that you will condescend to hear the address which I shall now read, as expressing those sentiments of respect and admiration which we know will be reiterated by the other inhabitants of a country that owes your lordship such an immense debt of gratitude for privileges which, but for your patriotic exertions, we could not have expected as yet to enjoy.' He then read the address, every sentence of which, the local prints say, 'was hailed with the most enthusiastic applause' from the multitude. The Earl replied at very considerable length, in his own manly and dignified, yet chaste and easy style of eloquence. His distinct articulation and his silvery tones made him audible to a large portion of the immense multitude; and the Borderers ceased to marvel at the sway which he had maintained successively over both Houses of Parliament by his oratory. He availed himself of the local memories and associations. 'In adverting to the proud reception which I have this day met with in this

the first town in Scotland, I cannot but congratulate you on the happier state of feeling which now exists between the two countries. I now stand upon the spot where our ancestors have met in deadly feud, and here—I an Englishman, and a Borderer too—am received as the friend of Scotland, and hailed with shouts of gratulation and triumph. I cannot thank you as I ought for the proud reception which you have this day given me—a reception that exceeds all that I could have conceived. To you, sir,’ said his lordship, addressing the Rev. A. Thomson, ‘I feel deeply indebted for the kind manifestation of your esteem: to all I feel indebted; and believe me that the recollections of the reception which I have this day experienced in the first town in Scotland shall last with my life.’ In the evening of the same day, ‘about fifty gentlemen dined together, the Rev. J. S. Taylor in the chair, and the Rev. A. Thomson, croupier.’

Shortly afterwards, when the Liberals of Berwickshire, in the midst of their triumph at having sent to Parliament the first Reforming representative of the county, Charles Marjoribanks of Lees, who was also a very accomplished and promising politician, were shocked by his sudden and premature death,—Dr. Thomson took a principal part in originating and in carrying into effect the proposal of raising a splendid monument to the memory of that lamented individual. The lofty column, sustaining a colossal statue, stands on the highest point of the precipitous rocks that form the Scottish bank of the Tweed at the eastern end of Coldstream; and it is the most conspicuous and commanding object in the extensive and picturesque landscape. The erection of this memorial, like the celebration of the merits of the veteran and retired statesman, was the work, not of a clique or a party, but of the Coldstream people at large, who, in all their enterprises, both expected and delighted to be led by the Secession minister, whose ardent public spirit was invariably guided by admirable discretion. Individually,

and as a community, they were ready to consult with him about everything that concerned their well-being, or the advantage, even the amenity, of the locality. When the Reform Bill had quickly borne such precious fruit as negro emancipation—the deliverance of eight hundred thousand human beings and British subjects from an accursed bondage—there was a deeper joy among the Border population than had been felt over the passing of the Reform Bill itself; and special thanksgiving was offered in their sanctuary to the God who had loosed the captives. Dr. Thomson and his fellow-townsmen had strong hopes that the Reformed Parliament would address itself to the task of amending the law, especially the criminal law; and they were interested in the results of reform, long after reform itself had ceased to excite congratulation. Mr. Marjoribanks was pledged to promote the full and early securing of those results, and he had high ability not less than thorough earnestness to do so. The regret caused by his death in the flower of manhood, and immediately after his entrance on political life, was deepened by the fact that his successor in the representation of the county was a Tory; and it seemed all the more proper and necessary that Charles Marjoribanks' too brief career in Parliament, and the triumph of the Berwickshire Liberals in choosing him, should be made monumental. That a large share of the labour in obtaining ways and means for having this worthily done fell upon Dr. Thomson, and that he performed it with characteristic energy, we learn from the many letters of cordial thanks addressed to him by the brothers and other relatives of Mr. Marjoribanks, all of whom wrote of the deceased with such an affection and pride as showed that he had been no less fascinating in private than he had been influential in public life. A few admirers appear to have somehow imagined that he had left graphic records of the views, experiences, and adventures which extensive travels in the East, followed by a lengthened residence in a distant dependency of our own

empire, had furnished ; and that those records, introducing a sketch of his short political history, might form a literary memorial which many in the county would prize, and which would be in keeping with the local monument. Dr. Thomson must have reported this for the family's consideration ; but one of the brothers (the same who several years ago restored to the county the privileges of Liberal representation, and still continues to discharge his duties most admirably as M.P. for Berwickshire) replied that there were no materials of the kind supposed.

We incidentally, a few pages back, adverted to Dr. Thomson's strong desire for merciful modifications upon our criminal code. He had been horrified, during a long period, by the frequent infliction of death-punishment for a diversity of offences against mere *property* ; and in his old age he spoke both oftener and with deeper satisfaction about the humane changes which he had lived to see introduced into the administration of justice, than about any other social improvement. We cannot now look into a chronicle of home events in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, without finding how often the hangman was called in to perform his ghastly office upon thieves and forgers—often when the crimes were petty ; often, too, when the criminals were mere *lads*, who seemed to be fitter subjects for parental correction alone. The case of a boy at Coventry undergoing the extreme penalty of the law, came in 1811 with painful closeness under his own notice ; and the scenes which he witnessed were indelibly impressed on his mind. The convict, who was between sixteen and seventeen years of age, belonged to a very poor family. He had been out through a cold winter day, and had tasted nothing except a field turnip. Reaching home ravenously hungry, he was told by his mother that all she had in the house was a few potatoes, which she was preparing for his little brothers and sisters, and of which he could get no share. In desperation,

or perhaps thinking that his hunger would be more intolerable if he were to remain a mere spectator of the humble and meagre supper for the juveniles, he left the cheerless house. Somehow, but without the use of any violence, he got into a pantry, where he found a meat-pie. With his clasp-knife he had begun to help himself, when he was surprised and seized. In turning quickly round to attempt an escape, his knife grazed upon a rib of the man who collared him, inflicting a slight scratch only. The boy was tried for burglary and murder. He confessed that he had attacked the pie, but denied that he had intended to stab or hurt any person—and actually nobody was hurt ; yet he was condemned to die. Dr. Thomson was travelling in England on behalf of the Scottish Missionary Society, and reached Coventry a day before the execution. He was urged by the Independent minister, who had regularly visited the convict, to accompany him to the ‘condemned cell ;’ and during the interview there, he was strongly pressed by the poor lad himself to return next morning along with the Independent minister, that both might attend him to the place of execution. He found next morning, when his friend and he had reached the prison, that three ministers—an Episcopalian, a Baptist, and the jail chaplain—were waiting to be shown into the cell ; and when to these were added a Presbyterian and an Independent, the clerical staff was surely strong enough. Dr. Thomson thought that there was an excess in the number of brethren, and proposed that he himself, if not one or two more of them, should withdraw ; but the boy having heard how many had arrived to attend him, insisted that they should all enter his cell. They found him looking bewildered and depressed, his aspect indicating that he had been prevented from acquiescing in his fate, and from preparing with the strain of his whole nature for the eternity that was so near, by a stubborn conviction that he had not deserved from his fellow-men such a doom. There was no ‘blood-guiltiness’ upon his soul

to reconcile him to the human exaction of his own life ; and what was about to be taken from him was not the poor remainder of a withered life, but a life with its very youth unspent, and in the fulness of youth's energies and hopes ; and this priceless treasure was demanded from him as compensation for the stealing of a few crumbs when he was in a famished condition ! Could a whole Synod of ministers exorcise the spirit of rebellion in the poor boy's breast against such an exaction by the law of a Christian State for the petty offence he had committed ? Dr. Thomson was asked to pray, and then the lad himself volunteered a prayer, which was not more incoherent than might have been expected. Before he had ended his supplications, the governor entered and announced that the magistrates were waiting. When leading out the convict to the prison chapel, where the process of ' pinioning ' was to be gone through, the ministers heard the governor kindly suggest that the lad, who had declined to eat all through the night and at breakfast, should take a little wine or porter. The contrast, at such scenes, between the inflexible severity of the sentence, and the soothing tenderness of almost all the officials towards the convict, seems to involve a confession that that sentence is too cruel, and beyond their right to inflict. In a minute or two, when the ministers met the now pinioned boy at the chapel door, they at once saw from his bearing and talk, that the stimulant which the governor had urged him to take was proving itself rather potent. His nerves had become steady, and he looked round, not with any effrontery, but with a pleasant composure. The execution was to take place in a moor at some distance from Coventry, and Dr. Thomson and the Independent minister were selected to go along with the prisoner in the chaise that waited to carry him to the spot ; but before either of the ministers could enter, a man in shabby sables hastily leaped into a seat beside the boy, as if afraid of losing sight of him for a moment. This was the grim ' finisher

of the law ;' but the boy did not appear to notice him. The streets through which the conveyance passed were densely crowded with people either standing to look into it, or hurrying onwards to the moor ; and the juvenile convict kept nodding pleasantly to individuals whom he recognised. Occasionally a shade crossed his face as he observed a group of old companions, who, he told the ministers, would be sure to be talking then of some trick that he had formerly played upon each. He was solemnly admonished to think of the eternity which was immediately before him ; but he replied that he was still in the midst of many familiar objects and friendly faces, and that when the town was passed he would 'settle down.' He mentioned that the chaise would soon pass his father's house, and that he would point it out. 'There !' he soon exclaimed, 'that's father's house. There's my aunt at the window, and mother and sisters at the door—all crying !' He afterwards called attention to several houses, adding that his father (who was a glazier by trade) had put in all the windows ! He expressed astonishment at the immense crowds, and thought that in all his days he had never seen such a gathering before. The ministers besought him to withdraw his eyes and his thoughts from the scenes around ; and Dr. Thomson engaged him to read the episode of the penitent thief, who, when dying, presented to the dying Saviour the petition, 'Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.' The lad kept turning from side to side of the crowded road, as if all his faculties were scattered in promiscuous sight-seeing. When stepping out of the chaise at the foot of the scaffold, he again expressed his astonishment at the greatness of the gathering (he really had never seen the like of it !) ; and he mounted the steps as if he were merely about to have a better view of the multitude. The Independent minister offered a short but most solemn and fervent prayer ; and then the lad himself, standing on the drop, asked leave to pray. He implored blessings for his 'poor

mother' in a touching strain, adding that she was 'a good woman.' Nor did he forget his other parent, though he described 'father' as always a 'random chap.' The remainder of the prayer was a strange outpouring of wishes and advices ; and as he concluded, the drop fell. Dr. Thomson and his Independent friend had intended to leave the scaffold at the close of the devotional exercises, and to depart in the chaise before the brief struggles of the poor boy began ; but they saw that the chaise had got wedged into the crowd, so that neither could the ministers reach the chaise, nor could the chaise be moved, until the crowd broke up. They were thus compelled to keep their places on the scaffold. A disgusting display of *English* superstition came under Dr. Thomson's notice at the most sickening stage of the tragedy. A young woman had placed herself near to the lad during his short death-struggle, and had got the executioner to rub her neck repeatedly with a hand of the dying convict. She expected to be in this way cured of a 'wen' which had long troubled her,—a touch from the dying, especially if death had no connection with disease or with old age, being in the locality accounted of miraculous efficacy for such complaints.

The Doctor always considered this Coventry execution as a judicial murder ; and the only justification which the authorities gave for it at the time was, that the youth of Coventry needed a severe example to check a portentous rush of precocious wickedness. He always, from this case, spoke strongly against the conduct of officials in administering, though from the kindest impulses, any stimulant to the condemned on such an occasion. Forty years later he heard an English minister deliver a striking discourse in Dr. Alexander Fletcher's chapel in London ; and on being, in the vestry, introduced to the preacher, was still regarding him as a stranger, when the latter asked if he did not remember the morning when both of them 'were driven to the gallows !' The stranger was the Indepen-

dent minister with whom the Doctor had been associated on the way to Coventry Moor. They would congratulate each other that in the long interval since they met at Coventry, the English criminal code had been rendered much more merciful and reverent of human life, and that henceforth such a spectacle as they had witnessed at Coventry was impossible, since no British subject, either of such a juvenile age, or charged with such a petty offence, could be consigned into the hands of the hangman. In the course of the vestry conversation, the English minister affirmed that he had at once and without any difficulty recognised his Scottish friend, in spite of the changes which forty years had effected upon face and figure ; and Dr. Alexander Fletcher, who was present, remarked, that had he and Adam Thomson never met since the time when they were fellow-students at Selkirk down to that moment, he would have easily identified the young student with the aged minister. A similar statement was repeatedly made by former Divinity Hall companions, on introducing themselves to him after prolonged terms of separation. They recognised his strongly-marked features ; and whenever they heard the peculiar tones of his voice, whether he was speaking in public or in private, every little uncertainty disappeared.

He was often called to visit and take a spiritual charge of those who were 'in prison.' In the first ages of Christianity, prisons were *homes* for eminent saints, who were there suffering for well-doing, not for evil-doing ; and apostles and pastors, when not themselves inmates, were visitors, with the view of enjoying high Christian fellowship. In modern times, however, and in our country, a prison population is without the saintly element which persecution gave ; and ministers attend to instruct the most ignorant, to arouse the most hardened, and to warn the most reprobate of their countrymen. Perhaps hitherto the general work of ministering to prison populations has been but irregularly and slightly undertaken by the clergy of all the

British churches ; and a special care has been manifested only for the few prisoners that are under sentence of death, and during the brief month that elapses between their conviction and their execution. Dr. Thomson was led in several instances to attend those who had been tried for murder and doomed to die. We have heard him detail recollections of deeply interesting interviews which he had held in the ‘condemned cell,’ and of striking words spoken even on the ‘drop.’ He attended *Rab* Scott, the Mellerstain gamekeeper, whose case made a strong and lasting sensation in the Border districts ; so that down to the present day, many of the young and the old people of the Merse feel a strange fascination about the various localities that were associated with his crime : the village where, at an annual fair, he took the drink that made him merry, quarrelsome, mad, fiendish ; the rural spot where, having overtaken the two acquaintances with whom he had been angry, he barbarously murdered and mangled them, and where, a few months afterwards, he was carried to suffer an ignominious death ; the cottage where he was apprehended ; and the town in which he was imprisoned. *Rab* had strong passions, but to control these he had a strong mind ; yet when he was under drink the ruler was expelled, and the slaves were masters. He was tried in Jedburgh, and the result was what everybody must have expected. To some readers it may be interesting to know that John Gibson Lockhart, the son-in-law and biographer of Sir Walter Scott, made his first and last speech as an advocate in defence of *Rab*. Dr. Thomson repeatedly visited the prisoner after his trial, and was struck with the clear view and the firm hold which he took of the saving truths of the gospel as applicable to his own case. His penitence of spirit seemed to be equally intense and genuine ; and he expressed his religious thoughts and feelings, not in a patchwork of phrases repeated by rote from his clerical visitors, or from the tracts which they left, but in his own fresh and

forcible language, and with his own graphic illustrations. In the last prison interview which the Doctor had with him, when speaking with humble yet assured confidence of having the Redeemer with him and for him in eternity, he said : ‘ At the trial here my advocate was *keen, keen* to get me off ; but the judge was completely against me. I read my sentence in the first look he turned upon me ; and when he addressed the jury, he blew away all that the advocate had said in my favour. But I am going to a great tribunal, where *my very Advocate is to be my Judge* ; and as surely as He pleads for me, will He decide for me.’ He threw out in his earnest talk many other remarks equally pertinent and forcible. He never sought to conceal his blood-guiltiness in general confessions of sin, but showed the deepest contrition not only for his sinful life, but for the atrocious murder, which he did not try to palliate. On the scaffold he prayed in a remarkable yet not extravagant strain, concluding with the Lord’s Prayer. When, in repeating this divine model, he came to the fourth petition, ‘ Give us this day our daily bread,’ he—obviously at the prompting of a reflection which flashed into his mind that moment—changed it thus : ‘ Give *those that need it* this day their daily bread’—a proof of the self-possession which enabled him to attend closely to the meaning of the words which he was using. When he came to the final petition, ‘ Deliver us from evil’—all the evil which gathers around the dread moment of death, and ‘ the evil one,’ who ‘ has the power of death’—he repeated it with the most intense earnestness ; and while thus throwing himself entirely upon the mercy of the Divine Deliverer, and beginning to repeat the words, ‘ For Thine is the kingdom,’ etc., he gave the signal, and immediately the drop fell.¹ Dr. Thomson was

¹ The following extract is from a note from Miss Marjoribanks of Lees, afterwards Lady Naysmith. She ‘ returns Mr. Thomson’s very interesting account of Robert Scott, with many thanks. If Mr. Thomson has no objections, Miss M. is very anxious to take it with her into Edinburgh to

led to attend several condemned criminals during their last days, and he sought to discharge the painful duty both tenderly and faithfully ; but the two cases we have detailed were those about which he afterwards spoke most frequently, earnestly, and minutely.

Dr. Thomson was led to take a deep interest in the band of CANADIANS who, towards the close of 1838, were doomed to banishment in Van Diemen's Land for alleged implication in a disloyal outbreak. The majority had spoken and written (in letters) as earnest 'reformers,' who were zealous for changes, but neither advocated nor resorted to the aid of physical force for the introduction of these ; and the colonial authorities being under a panic at the time, treated them as revolutionists and rebels, who, if not dismissed out of life, could expect no milder punishment than expatriation to a penal settlement for a long period of years. When the prisoners reached England, on their way to Van Diemen's Land, several legal as well as political and social questions were raised, which detained them for many months in Newgate Jail. Dr. Thomson received from well-known clergymen in America and Canada, strong attestations and recommendations in favour of particular individuals among those prisoners ; and these individuals themselves sent him voluminous communications about their past history, and about their families. They often enclosed letters which they had recently got from their far distant homes ; and some of these messages from wife, mother, sister, or daughter, were artlessly pathetic, and marked by pious resignation and hope. One or two of the prisoners were highly intellectual as well as intelligent, and prison solitude concentrated, if it did not develop, their faculties. Mr. Parker, who had been a wealthy merchant in Hamilton, was the Doctor's principal correspon-

have it printed, as she feels satisfied it is a story so simply and naturally told, that it cannot fail to produce the best possible effect on the minds of its readers.'

dent ; and his effusions were fitted to attract towards him the warmest sympathy. Dr. Thomson was energetic and persevering in his efforts to obtain redress for the grievances of the unfortunate captives, addressing himself to all the members of Parliament he knew, and preparing memorials to Government. The prisoners appreciated his interference, and in token of their gratitude, sent some small but very ingenious articles of their own manufacture to each member of his family.

His zeal in defending those who were suffering from intolerance, and who were yet, at the same time, receiving general obloquy instead of sympathy, was unabated in old age. In December 1850 (and the date is interesting, as marking the close of his long and regular attendance on church courts, for before another meeting of Presbytery he was attacked by paralysis) he made a highly characteristic appearance before the Berwick Presbytery on behalf of the Rev. John Peden, who was at the time under a pressure of local persecution and abuse. This brother had been summoned by the Berwick Town Council to pay 'Easter dues' for the Church of England ; and along with the money, he had handed in a strong protest against the injustice of the exaction. The protest provoked Churchmen, who are strong, yet neither meek nor mild, in the locality ; and it rather scandalized the timid among Dissenters, who judged that if he could not make the payment in a spirit of gladness and gratitude, he should at least have concealed his reluctance. Had he been guilty of some fearful act of sacrilege, Churchmen could not have condemned him more vehemently. Quite a storm of censure and invective burst out upon him for taking the liberty of saying that, as a Dissenter and a Dissenting minister, he paid the tax unwillingly. Dr. Thomson thought that the Berwick Presbytery, to which both he and Mr. Peden belonged, should express approval of Mr. Peden's procedure, confidence in his high Christian

character and in his scrupulous conscientiousness, sympathy with him under the virulent abuse to which he had been subjected, and reprobation both of the tax which he had been compelled to pay, and of the malignant slander and reproach which he had borne. He brought forward a series of resolutions indicative of such views, and supported them in an animated speech.

The question of Easter dues, like that of the Edinburgh Annuity Tax, has never been discussed in the church courts of the Secession without eliciting a diversity of opinion on almost all points, except the one about the utter injustice of the impost which was unanimously condemned. As to what those Dissenters from whom the impost was exigible should do, there were conflicting judgments. One party in Presbytery and Synod thought that Dissenters should submissively and quietly pay, whilst they took constitutional measures to have the law in favour of the tax repealed; another party held that Dissenters should pay, but with an indignant and emphatic protest before the public; and a third party urged that Dissenters should persistently refuse payment, leaving to the law the alternative of seizing upon the property or imprisoning the person of any recusant. The first and second parties believed that it was merely a question as to how they should bear wrong; but the third party maintained that it involved much more, and made them sharers in doing and perpetuating wrong, if they consented to pay either with or without a protest. Holding such a diversity of views, the Berwick Presbytery could not be expected to come to a satisfactory decision on Mr. Peden's case. All the members agreed, indeed, in condemning both the impost and the general abuse to which he had been subjected, and also in expressing their confidence in and sympathy with him; but they were far from united in testifying an unqualified approval of all that he had done; nay, a majority declined to move in that direction, for

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they held his public protest to be unwise, and some of his references to the Church of England objectionable ; and ultimately they carried resolutions that assured him of their esteem and sympathy, but reserved any judgment on the propriety and expediency of the steps he had taken. Dr. Thomson dissented from this 'finding' of the Presbytery as too vague for the occasion, and mentioned that he might refer the case to the Synod. But before another meeting of Presbytery, the 'hand of God was upon him,' and paralysis disabled him for the attendance which he had regularly given for nearly half a century to his church courts. It was eminently characteristic and becoming that, in unconsciously closing that attendance, he should signalize it by his zealous defence of a brother who had been wronged and calumniated. He was the 'father of the Presbytery,' and the majority of the members were, as men and ministers, his juniors by many years ; and it might have been expected that the youth of the latter would furnish the zeal, and the age of the former the caution and discretion. On the contrary, it was the oldest member who displayed the most generous ardour, whilst the young men intervened with their prudential checks. We make no invidious comparisons, for, in the divided state of opinion on the subject, the Presbytery could not have more strongly supported Mr. Peden.

To him it was a great privation, when meetings of Presbytery and Synod came round, that he could no longer set out to meet his brethren, intercourse with whom he had always reckoned a dear privilege and a profitable delight. He had all along been drawn to those meetings by a desire to join in the deliberations and discussions which church business received, and to associate with his brethren ; whereas not a few ministers are influenced, according to their own confession, by one motive singly—some attending for the sake of church business alone, and others for the sake of fellowship alone. The latter have no wish except to see their friends, and would not regret

although the court business were conducted in a foreign language ; and the former are engrossed with this court business, and all their cultivation of brotherly intercourse is a little hand-shaking. But in Dr. Thomson the two motives for attending church courts were equally strong : the business was interesting and important, and he delighted to meet with friends.

During the greater part of his ministry, the 'Presbytery Dinner' came regularly after court business, and showed Presbyterianism in a pleasantly yet decorously relaxed mood,—addressing itself, with no unnatural length either of face or of 'grace,' to the good cheer on the table, and at the same time attending to the 'feast of reason and the flow of soul' so eagerly, that the general conversation drowned the rather unmusical 'clatter' of busy knives and forks and 'grinders.' The dinner-talk was the 'dainty' chiefly relished, and it gave social and mental exhilaration. The moderator acted as chairman, and the clerk as croupier, and a stranger minister was treated as the Presbytery's 'guest.' But the 'Presbytery Dinner,' which left associations and recollections more pleasant than those of an epicurean kind, was, in Dr. Thomson's old age, passing away, and has now, in many Presbyteries of his Church, become obsolete, through railway arrangements and other novelties.

CHAPTER VI.

HIS LABOURS FOR FREE AND CHEAP BIBLES.

[1837-51.]



R. THOMSON was on the verge of 'threescore' years when he entered upon the arduous and protracted labours which have justly made his by far the most conspicuous name in connection with the great cause of free and cheap Bibles ; and the next 'ten,' which often seem to be thrown into the longer period as its mere fag-end, were his most energetic and productive years. At the age of sixty, he might have been found wholly retired within his pastoral sphere and its narrower walks, there moving more quietly and leisurely among his own people, and declining to respond to the signals that summoned him to engage in strenuous conflict with the BIBLE MONOPOLY, and with the formidable forces arrayed in its defence. But the weight of so many hard-spent years had not in the least pressed upon him—taking away the spring of his vigour and zeal, or of his courage and hope for a difficult enterprise, and counselling cautious and relaxed exertion ; nor was he now, more than in youth, inclined to the idea of *resting*, which he identified with that of *rusting* in ignoble sloth. A sanguine temperament is in any great undertaking more than 'banners and music' in a military campaign, for it stimulates and sustains, as well as exhilarates ; and in Dr. Thomson's case, that temperament escaped the ravages of time and the chilling influences of experience. His physical system had given no sign of being more easily fatigued, and of more slowly or partially recovering

its strength and tone. 'His eye was not dim, nor was his natural force abated' or unstrung, and his figure did not stoop under the burden of those years which made his head venerable. He might not look much younger than he was ; but he both appeared to be and really was as capable of action and endurance, physical and mental, as in the very meridian of life. If he had foreseen all that was involved in what he undertook—the accumulated toil, the intense anxiety, and, after victory, the overwhelming trials and losses incurred in his eagerness to see the fruits of victory immediately and fully reaped by the public—he would still have been undismayed by the prospect. At no stage of the enterprise did he repent of having committed himself to it unreservedly ; and eventually, in looking back to all that he had suffered, he found compensation enough in the fact that 'the word of the Lord was no longer bound.'

In narrating what he did, there is no temptation to exaggerate either its amount or its value, still less to conceal or underrate what was done by others before or at the same time with his exertions. His various coadjutors rendered great and indispensable assistance, as he invariably and fully acknowledged ; but they never could be reckoned his rivals, for he was the principal instrument both in bringing about the abolition of the Scottish Bible monopoly, and in causing the benefits of free trade in Bibles to be immediately and extensively realized. Joseph Hume, M.P., and Mr. Childs, printer in Bungay, along with some members of the Liberal Government of the day, gave him important help in the struggle for abolition ; and Dr. John Campbell of London, who had nothing whatever to do with the work of 'Bible EMANCIPATION,' afterwards came forward to help nobly in the work of 'Bible CHEAPENING.' Yet those assistants in the cause of free and cheap Bibles figured far less prominently beside Dr. Thomson than, in the struggle for free trade in corn, Colonel Thompson, Mr. James Wilson, and Mr. Bright figured beside Richard

Cobden, who has, however, borne away the chief honours as the 'hero' of Free Trade.

In the reign of Queen Victoria the two great monopolies in corn and Bibles have been abolished ; but the reign of Queen Elizabeth was remarkable for the vast number of monopolies then introduced. 'Elizabeth,' says the *Quarterly Review* (for January 1859, in an article on 'Patents'), "moved thereunto by good considerations," granted to Bryan Annersley the sole right to buy and provide steel within her realm ; to John Spilman the power of buying rags and making paper ; to Schets and his assignees the privilege of buying and transporting ashes and old shoes, to the manifest hurt and detriment of all other dustmen and old clothes collectors. In fact, the list of commodities for which monopolies were granted by the iron-willed virgin queen is almost interminable. The sale of salt, currants, starch, leather, paper, tin, lead, iron, steel, sulphur, oils, bones, powder, and of a hundred other things, was restricted to favoured persons, who were so rapacious as to feel no scruple in raising the price of their articles 1000 per cent. and upwards. The price of salt, for instance, was raised from 16d. per bushel to 14s. or 15s. The monopolists were armed by royal authority with arbitrary power to oppress the people at their pleasure, to enter houses and search them, and to exact heavy penalties from all who interfered with their prerogative. Monopolies were, in truth, an excise not fixed by law, but regulated by the will of a greedy tradesman, who, having bought his right to be extortionate, was in haste to repay himself, and to get rich into the bargain.' Our ancestors, however, would not endure to be tied hand and foot and robbed by those patents, and a statute in the very next reign gave relief ; and yet the nation has quietly submitted to the most flagitious and hurtful of all monopolies—the Bible monopoly, which practically interdicted many from *possessing* a Bible, after Queen Elizabeth had removed the papal interdict against *reading* it.

A royal patent for printing the Bible does not stand upon the same footing as a State Church. The latter assumes a paternally-benevolent aspect towards the millions,—providing a church, preaching, and pastoral superintendence in every locality, and bringing the blessings of the gospel within reach of the poor. But a Bible monopoly has no such aspect, nor does it pretend to give a single Bible gratuitously to the poor. Nay, it exacts such exorbitant prices for all its copies of the Bible, that the millions of poor people must submit to an utterly insufficient supply, which the charity of the rich can but too slightly augment; and thus the heavenly manna, which God freely sends to all, is intercepted and locked up within a royal patent, to be distributed only at such high prices as shall enrich the one or two patentees, and leave the poor population to perish for lack of the bread of life. If a State Church were similarly organized, it could no longer in any sense be called the ‘church of the poor man,’ since he, as a hearer of its ministrations, would be compelled to pay *three or four times* the amount of seat-rent expected from even a member of the middle class attending a Dissenting Church—just as, for a ‘privileged’ Bible, got up in the humblest style, he paid three or four times the price that is charged, under free trade, for a beautiful copy. A Bible patent is, indeed, monstrously wrong in principle, and equally mischievous in practice; and that it should have been granted by several Protestant Governments, and submitted to by a Protestant nation, is a marvel. Even if care had been taken that the privileged printer should produce copies of the Bible remarkable both for accuracy and for cheapness, the monopoly in his favour would have been unwarrantable; but when every patentee was allowed to print as incorrectly as he chose, and to ask prices as high as his avarice dictated (for he was liable to no penalty), the indefensible character of that monopoly was aggravated to an outrageous degree. In Scotland the right of

printing Bibles had been granted exclusively to a company of two private persons—Blair and Bruce—neither of whom had any practical knowledge of the art of printing, or took any interest in the different editions of the English Bible ; yet, like their brother-monopolists in England, they had also long held the privilege of supplying all the public revenue offices of Government with stationery, etc. This latter privilege yielded the two Scottish patentees an annual profit of more than £6000 ; but the Government, in a mood of thrift, ordered the surrender of this fruitful branch of the monopoly. Still, not only was compensation for this loss allowed, but the monopolists were continued in their ‘vested rights,’ to make all the money they could by Bible printing, there being no limit to the profits which they might thence realize.¹ Sir David Hunter Blair and Mrs. Bruce, as the only printers commissioned or tolerated to issue Bibles in Scotland, were at liberty to render this royal source of income lucrative far beyond all ‘printers’ estimates ;’ nor, when enjoying their many thousands a year, were they invited to consider that it was at the tremendous cost of withholding the bread of life from the people. In Scotland there was not the competition known in England, where patents had been given not only to the firm of Messrs. Strahan, Eyre, and Spottiswoode, but to each of the two Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Previous to 1821, the Bibles of the English monopolists came freely into Scotland ; but then a prohibition, supported by decisions in the Court of Session and the House of Lords, was obtained. In 1824 Dr. Thomson and other ministers were summoned to answer for ‘the high crime and misdemeanour’ of having, as directors of

¹ The first Committee on the Bible Patents, both in England and Scotland, sat in the years 1830–31, with Mr. Joseph Hume as its chairman ; yet, after taking valuable evidence, it broke up without any decisive result, except against the monopolists supplying the Government offices with *stationery, etc.* Mr. Hume was also a member of the Committee (in 1837) upon the Scottish Bible Monopoly.

Bible Societies, distributed copies of an edition of the Scriptures which had been printed in England, but which the Scottish monopolists would not permit to circulate in Scotland!¹ These Scottish monopolists were indignant that their English brethren, who had a far ampler and richer field for cultivating the monopoly, should cross over into their humbler inclosure, and share their smaller profits; whilst the people had better reasons for being angry at both, and at their sordid operations upon the Bible.

Yet almost down to the period when the exclusive right of *Blair and Bruce* to print Bibles in Scotland fell to be renewed, there was no sign of a rising storm against this wicked monopoly. There was no warning to the Scottish any more than to the English monopolists, to 'set their house in order.' There was no hint of change, far less of such a complete sweeping away as had taken place under the rule of Oliver Cromwell, who gave to the 'law and the gospel, prophets and apostles,' a much fuller deliverance from bondage than they had received from Queen Elizabeth. No public or even party sentiment had been expressed or formed against the Bible monopoly; and the millions suffering from it raised no complaint against its continuance. In Scotland, the Rev. Dr. John Lee (afterwards Principal of Edinburgh University) was minutely acquainted with its history, its indefensible principles and their mischievous operation, and its utter failure in securing accuracy. He had curious information about the immense number of blunders in the choicest editions; blunders that sometimes impressed him with the idea of wanton negligence, and at other times with that of wilful error,—as if the devil had

¹ Bible Societies in Scotland had received, in return for their subscriptions to the great London Society, copies of an octavo Bible in large type, to which the Scotch patentees had no corresponding edition, and which was greatly prized by the aged. The Scottish monopolists resented this importation, just as they, too, when formerly trying to send their Bibles into England, had been interdicted. English Bibles could not 'poach' in Scotland, nor could Scotch Bibles 'poach' in England.

interfered with the setting up of the types, especially in the case of the Ten Commandments with the important 'not' left out—a reading quite his own!¹ Dr. Lee had also conversed with extensive printers, and received their estimates for the production of various editions of the Bible; and thus he knew how enormous were the profits of the monopolists, and what a heavy taxation these men imposed upon the annual expenditure of the British and Foreign Bible Society and its branches. He was ready to disclose his information to all who sought it, and to detail it precisely before a Parliamentary Committee. Yet he was a mere scholar, not a man of action; and he quietly carried about with him such facts and ideas as would have impelled a man like Dr. Adam Thomson to take prompt and decisive measures. There was another Scot who was interested in the Bible monopoly—Mr. Joseph Hume, M.P., emphatically a man of action not less than of speech. He had repeatedly urged the appointment of a House of Commons' Committee to report on the character and working of the monopoly; and he was a man of indomitable perseverance in pursuing his aims. But he was a 'root and branch'—a radical and universal—reformer; and the abuses which he set himself to remove were 'legion'—far more than the labours of Hercules; and among the innumerable grievances which he meant to abolish, and of which not a few required his constant attention and most strenuous energy, the Bible monopoly could only receive a slight share of his assailable force. It was but a small item in his 'tattle of the whole' (as he was wont to pronounce the favourite

¹ In an old edition, printed in England by a king's printer, the Seventh Commandment is given without the 'not.' In an old Scotch edition the apostle is made to say, 'Know ye not that the righteous shall *not* inherit the kingdom of God?' In another Scotch edition the '*four* beasts' of the Apocalypse are the '*sour* beasts.' An Oxford folio has 'vinegar' for 'vineyard;' hence this edition was known as the 'Vinegar Bible.' A gentleman sent to the Archbishop of Canterbury a list of 12,000 errors which he had found in the Oxford Nonpareil Bible.

phrase); and if he had undertaken far fewer causes, he would have devoted to that of Bible emancipation a much more concentrated and successful vigour.

There was, however, an English printer, Mr. Childs of Bungay, who thoroughly knew and condemned all the principles and results of a Bible printing patent. He was eminently practical; what he thought he not only expressed in fluent talk and voluminous correspondence, but he embodied in deeds. He had been an enemy to the obnoxious Church-rate of that period; and, rather than pay it, he submitted to incarceration. He had closely examined the whole question of the Bible monopoly, compared its prices with those estimated by printers for reasonable profits, and found that its gains were enormous. Though specially interested in the English patents, yet aware that the one for *Scotland* fell to be renewed sooner by twenty years, he was eager to assail the monopoly held by *Blair and Bruce*; and he kept dunning Joseph Hume to move in the House of Commons the appointment of a committee to consider the subject, and to decide if the Scottish patent should not be left to expire. Certainly there was little in the opposition which was thus being arrayed against the monopoly that could look formidable, or indicate the approach of abolition. By the monopolists riding prosperously in their chariot, the three grumblers—Lee, Hume, and Childs—might have been regarded as the moralizing attendants who, in eastern fashion, reminded them that they were ‘mortal’ in the abstract, but did not predict their speedy death. Blair and Bruce could see nothing to discourage their confident expectation that their patent would be renewed for another term of forty years. Neither Mr. Hume nor Mr. Childs had influenced public opinion on the question any more than had Dr. Lee; and though before the House of Commons’ Committee, that was reorganized in 1837, Mr. Childs gave full and convincing evidence against the monopoly in its leading aspects and tendencies,

yet unfortunately this evidence did not circulate widely in the country. Mr. Childs had been looking out for a *Scottish* Dissenting minister of proved ability, zeal, and influence, who should feel the immense and urgent importance of the question, and, after mastering the unjust principles and the injurious results of the monopoly, should testify to these before the committee in a weighty and pointed manner, and effectively bring them also before the ministers and people of Scotland. He fixed upon Dr. Thomson, and the letter in which he invited the Doctor to prepare for becoming a witness was the beginning of a ten years' copious correspondence—the first in a series of many hundreds of very lengthy letters,—in which Mr. Childs, with great shrewdness, sagacity, and vigour, and with perfect confidence of being always in the right, acted as universal censor, pronouncing oracularly upon all ecclesiastical and political men and affairs ; expressing unqualified contempt for the House of Lords, and very small satisfaction with the House of Commons ; showing no mercy to Churchmen, and little but asperity to Dissenters ; and denouncing all British journals as blind or base except the *Nonconformist*. The natural raciness of the Bungay judgments upon all public men and measures, was heightened by the quiet assumption of infallibility. Dr. Thomson had not proceeded far in his inquiries about the Scottish Bible monopoly before he felt an engrossing interest which led him to consider the subject thoroughly, and to resolve that the testimony which he would give against the monopoly in his examination before the Parliamentary Committee should be followed up by strenuous exertions, though he did not anticipate either their form or their amount, far less the grand success which was soon to crown them. The evidence which he laid before the committee when he appeared in 1837, was strong and decisive in favour of the free printing of the Bible ; and the chairman of that committee, who was then Lord Advocate for Scotland,

and afterwards well known on the Scottish bench as Lord Murray, always spoke of it as peculiarly valuable. The committee, though calm and impartial, was generally favourable to free trade views, having been deeply impressed by the fearful evils that had been disclosed in the history of the patent ; but there was one member, Sir Robert Inglis, who—unmoved by all the proofs that the patent locked up the word of God from vast multitudes that urgently needed it—continued to stand firmly by the cause of the monopolists. Sir Robert put what he considered some ‘staggering’ questions to Dr. Thomson about the inability of free printing to produce ‘accurate’ and ‘beautiful’ as well as cheap copies of the Bible, and he conjured up the contingency of infidels daring to adulterate, and even with their own atheistic principles to poison, the Bible, and to pass it off as genuine. Would not free trade lead to the issue of such Babel versions of holy Scripture as would make it difficult to find, or at least to know, a really genuine copy? The Baronet was far more adroit, subtle, and powerful in the cross-examination of witnesses before a committee than could have been expected from the fervent, extreme, and blindly straightforward character of his Parliamentary oratory, which was a continual exemplification of his knocking his rather soft head against the hardest walls, and which went far to class him with the notorious Colonel Sibthorpe. As a committee man, he could exercise upon witnesses the ingenuity and torturing faculty of a lawyer ; and with a Dissenting minister before him he was tempted to play the inquisitor. But no cross-examination on the side of Bible monopolists could be really formidable ; and Dr. Thomson satisfactorily disposed of all the objections and fears which Sir Robert Inglis paraded. The witness reminded the objector that the monopolists had enjoyed full scope, and suffered no penalty, for blundering, and that they had blundered often and grossly ; whereas free competition would furnish the best guarantee for accuracy ; and the printer

who sent forth a corrupted or spurious Bible would quickly find it unsaleable, and his capital and reputation gone! Sir Robert, however, sceptically shook his head. The hands of sordid avarice, that had seized upon the Bible, and extracted thence many thousands sterling a year, at a cost to the working population of something infinitely more valuable than gold, were believed by him to be ‘guardian’ hands, piously busy in the function of protecting the sacred book’s ‘accuracy!’ *Blair and Bruce* were, in his view, the right hand and the left of a special providence, preserving for Scotland a genuine and reliable Bible! Sir Robert, perhaps, also imagined that they took—unwillingly, if not unconsciously—the splendid revenue of the privilege. Dr. Thomson struck a bold key-note when, in one of his earliest answers, he declared that ‘all monopolies were bad; that of all monopolies, a religious monopoly was the worst; and that of all religious monopolies, a monopoly of the word of God was the most outrageous;’ and the sequel of his testimony was equally firm and thorough-going. In illustrating the grievous hardship of the monopoly and its high-priced Bibles to the poor, he rather startled the committee by advancing his belief, not only that the poor needed the Bible no less than did the rich, but that, in Scotland, the poor were the chief buyers and readers of the Bible! A poor family, subsisting on £40 a year, would have as many copies of the Bible as a nobleman’s family rejoicing in £40,000 a year. When asked if the Bible was not actually cheaper than any other book, he, after showing both how it could and why it should be by far the cheapest book, added, that it must be held as seriously too dear if it could be made a single penny cheaper; whereas, in truth, regarding all the low-priced Bibles furnished by the monopolists, the reduction should be by *shillings*, and not by *pence*.¹ The operation of the monopoly,

¹ On one of the days of his examination, he called on a friend at the London Coffee-House before going to the House of Commons. He was

in robbing the poor both of their money and of Bibles, was strikingly demonstrated during his repeated examinations; yet had he then predicted the exact reductions which he himself made upon the prices of Bibles after the abolition of the monopoly, the committee would have regarded him as a visionary. Several members of the committee sought to draw forth the special facts and considerations which told emphatically against the patent; and Dr. Thomson never forgot the care and skill shown by the chairman (Lord Advocate Murray), Mr. Fox Maule (now Lord Dalhousie), Mr. Chalmers (member for Montrose, who drew up the committee's report), Mr. Rutherford (who, before the expiry of the Scottish patent, became Lord Advocate, and afterwards Lord Rutherford, and who devised the regulations that have worked so satisfactorily under free trade in Bibles), Mr. John Wilks (member for Boston), Mr. Wallace, and the redoubtable Joseph Hume. The queries which these members of committee put, rendered the evidence more complete and pointed against the renewal of the patent. Some of them also kept Dr. Thomson duly apprised of the progress which the inquiry was making, and of the direction to which it was strongly inclining. The committee of 1837 prosecuted their labours with earnest diligence and despatch, and within three months after their first sitting presented their report to the House of Commons. There was great delay, however, in printing and issuing the committee's recommendations, as if the Government either hesitated about adopting them, or feared that the House of Commons would reject

there introduced to an American gentleman, who showed him an American Bible, mentioning its price. He lent it to Dr. Thomson, who that day laid it on the committee's table, and appealed to the members if it would not in Britain cost 7s. 6d.; whereas its price in America was only 2s. 6d., though labour was much dearer in America. The easy explanation was, that in America there was no monopoly. Sir Robert Inglis would have been delighted, as he looked carefully into the volume, if he could have detected any 'inaccuracies!' Afterwards large orders for *Coldstream* Bibles came from America.

them ; and for weary months Dr. Thomson felt painful misgivings. At length the report appeared, recommending 'that the Queen's Printers' patent in Scotland should not be renewed, and that the people of Scotland should have the advantage of the competition which the free introduction of Bibles and Testaments from the presses of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and her Majesty's Printers in England, will afford.' The report also proposed that the Bible trade should be thrown open in Scotland itself, subject to certain restrictions and privileges in favour of particular parties, which looked both offensive and unnecessary.¹ The report expressed the views of all the members of the Select Committee, with the single exception of Sir Robert Inglis, who dissented from all the resolutions ; but, outside of the committee, there were in Parliament far more powerful supporters of a Bible monopoly than that Baronet, and they had Sir James Graham and Mr. Goulburn as leaders, whilst the Whig Government was every day becoming feebler.

Dr. Thomson had just given his evidence before the committee, when, in April 1837, he brought the question of the monopoly in Scotland under the consideration of the Secession

¹ The following paragraphs give the leading points of the Report about Bible printing in Scotland :—

'7. That, in the opinion of this committee, the Queen's Printers' patent in Scotland should not be renewed, and that the people of Scotland should have the advantage of the competition which the free introduction of Bibles and Testaments from the presses of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and her Majesty's printers in England and Ireland, will afford.

'8. That the committee recommend that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and also each of the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St. Andrews, shall be empowered, by licence from the Queen, to appoint a printer of the Holy Scriptures, under their authority, and subject to such revision and conditions as to security for the purity of the text as they shall respectively sanction.

'9. That other persons in Scotland may print and publish editions of Bibles, Testaments, and Psalms, on their finding security to the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer, for the conformity of the text with the version now printed by her Majesty's Printers in Scotland.

Synod ; and his brethren agreed to petition Parliament against any renewal of the patent, and to appoint a committee of Synod to watch the proceedings of the Select Committee and the House of Commons on the question. Of that Synod committee Dr. Thomson was chairman ; and certainly he did not sleep at his post, but was intensely vigilant, and, ere long, he combined energetic action with vigilance, until all danger of a monopoly, in any form or degree, being imposed, had passed away. The general apathy, and the silence and neutrality of that great London Bible Society, which should long ago have assailed the monopoly as a stupendous hindrance to Bible circulation, only stimulated his zeal.

On the publication of the Parliamentary Committee's report, he and his brethren were delighted with the leading recommendations, but resolved to contend for the removal or modification of certain arrangements unduly favourable to the universities and the Church of Scotland. But in a little Dr. Thomson was apprised of such movements as threatened to neutralize those leading recommendations, and instead of abolishing, merely to transfer to new favourites the worst privileges of the monopoly. The 'carcass' had not yet been put out of sight ; and though *Blair and Bruce* had received notice to quit, other 'eagles' were gathering. Mr. Childs wrote repeatedly to the effect that he had reason to believe that Mr. Adam Black would be 'Her Majesty's Printer for Scotland,' under some novel conditions for securing accuracy and a considerable reduction in the prices of Bibles for the people, and for also allowing the poor universities of the north a share of the monopoly ; and that Government regarded this appropriation as likely to please both Churchmen and Dissenters. The rumour might not be without a little plausibility, as Mr. Black was known to approve of some kind or degree of a Bible monopoly ; still Mr. Childs discussed the random surmise as a fact, and launched many thunderbolts against the sturdy

Liberal politician and the equally sturdy Independent and Voluntary Churchman holding the Bible patent. Dr. Thomson had no faith in this Bungay news ; for, though astonished at Mr. Black's championship of any form of a Bible monopoly, he refused to believe that Mr. Black would ever, for himself, accept of that monopoly.

There were, however, parties and corporations possessed of great influence, and endeavouring with all their might to gain the privilege which individuals had no chance of holding. Dr. Chalmers was said to be anxious to secure the Bible patent for the Church of Scotland, in order that the large revenue might be devoted to his Church Extension Scheme. But the non-intrusion policy and zeal of that party in the Church which was led by Chalmers, were not at the time fitted to move Government to favour the Church with that monopoly for the endowment of the Church Extension Scheme. When, four or five years later, the 'Disruption' took place, Dr. Chalmers and his associates were thankful that the Bible printing privilege had been withheld from his Church Extension Scheme ; otherwise the Established Church, from which they and so many hundreds of her best ministers had all at once seceded, would have inherited that privilege, just as it has claimed for its own property the many chapels of ease which were erected by the labours and subscriptions of the very party that left the Church, and that now forms the Free Church. Yet, if the Church Extensionists coveted the patent, they neither long nor loudly knocked at the door of Government ; though, as petitioners for other rights or favours, they were sufficiently energetic and importunate. They probably felt that, in the circumstances, it was not more desirable than it was unattainable ; and indeed Dr. Thomson never spoke of them as having made any appearance to claim the privilege.

It was, however, widely different with the FOUR SCOTTISH UNIVERSITIES, for these addressed themselves to the Govern-

ment with extreme earnestness and importunity, and brought the influence of men and of parties, that stood high both in Church and State, to support the claims which they urged ; and all these batteries for besieging the Government were carefully masked from Dissenters, who had no suspicion of the universities' design to demand for themselves the Bible monopoly, and in their own leagued strength, and with all the allied forces they could muster, to make an overwhelming rush upon Downing Street, and carry their point before Dissenters could come to the rescue, or a signal of danger could be transmitted to the Coldstream sentinel. The universities resolved to put forth all their might, yet to conceal it under tactics of cunning, that should surprise as well as defeat Dissenters ; and the leaders of the siege, Sir David Brewster and Principal Haldane, quietly set out for London—the knight as if he were to read a scientific paper to the Royal Society, and the divine as if he were to solicit the Home Secretary for the presentation of some small parochial charge to a favourite pupil ! Yet Wellington at midnight, quitting the ball at Brussels, was not more intent than either of those university men on thoughts of warfare and its momentous issues ! The universities confessed their poverty, yet boasted (with truth) that, in spite of their humble endowments and scanty resources, they had achieved great things in educating thousands from every class of the population ; but that, if they had possessed the clear profits which the Bible patent had yielded to Blair and Bruce, they would have exhibited astonishing results. Why should they not have such a right to Bible printing as the English universities enjoyed ? The allegation that the latter provided the scholars who translated the Bible into the 'authorized version,' could not cover the case of the Scottish universities ; still, as it really offered to the English universities no basis for their privilege, their Scottish neighbours should be none the worse for lacking it. It was quite in keeping with another plea for the

monopoly; that, as King James had both ordered and paid for the translation, it became the 'copyright' of the Crown for ever!

The two representatives of the Scottish universities had, on reaching London, been joined by other influential Professors from the north; and rejoicing to find a clear field, where there was no zealous Abolitionist to watch and check their movements, they sought interviews with the leading members of the Cabinet, and with all the statesmen and politicians who could advance their cause. The strange delay in the appearance of the Select Committee's report emboldened them to hope that Government would favour a compromise, and not a radical sweeping away, of the old privilege; and their speculations upon the indecisive character and the unstable condition of that Government, confirmed their expectations of a compromise which would give moderate satisfaction to all parties, rather than of a complete abolition, which would gratify the Dissenters alone. How hesitating the Government of that period was towards monopolies, was soon afterwards shown by its proposal to settle the corn monopoly by imposing an eight shillings fixed duty on each quarter; and, certainly, had the Scottish Bible monopoly been settled in the same way, a very considerable share of the privilege might have been allowed to the four universities. The deputation assured the members of Government, and all the Parliamentary men with whom they consulted, that a grant of the Bible patent to the four universities would not be more acceptable to Churchmen than to Dissenters, who were taking a deep interest in the efficiency of those seats of learning! A few extreme sectarians might make an outcry against it; but 'all enlightened Dissenters' would give it their cordial approval. The universities' deputation had distinctly ascertained and confidently attested this to be the state of opinion among Dissenters, and there was no other party to oppose the universities becoming Bible patentees. How such an utter misrepresentation of Dissenting opinion

should be made by honourable and intelligent Scots, we shall not here pause to inquire. Fortunately, the truth upon this and other bearings of the question followed swiftly in the wake of misrepresentation. Dr. Thomson was 'one morning surprised' by a letter from Mr. Peter Chalmers, communicating the intelligence, which he had just received from a secret but reliable quarter, of a select deputation setting out from St. Andrews to transact with Government the transference of the Bible patent for Scotland to the four universities. Mr. Chalmers foresaw imminent danger to the infant cause of free Bible printing, and suspected that the universities must have sounded the Government, and got encouragement, before they ventured on a fully-equipped embassy. Dr. Thomson was not less deeply alarmed, and without a moment's delay he bestirred himself to counteract the mischief which was in progress. He warned and stimulated the Synod's Bible Monopoly Committee; he wrote to all the M.P.s whom he personally knew, repeating what he had heard, and denouncing the suddenly-presented claim of the universities; he corresponded with many of his clerical brethren, urging these to put themselves into immediate communication with all the Parliamentary men whom they severally knew; he sounded an alarm through the newspaper press; yet, having got through this varied task-work of correspondence, he felt that the crisis called for the presence, in London, of a zealous and resolute advocate of free and cheap Bibles, to follow the university men wherever they stated their cause, and to expose their one-sided views. A 'word spoken in season' in 'high places,' how potent it has sometimes proved! Nor did he feel free to shift the responsibility of being that one advocate from himself to any other person, known or unknown; but, from the prominent position which he had taken up, and from the determination he had formed to maintain an uncompromising warfare against the monopoly until the Bible should be completely free, he was

constrained to go into 'the breach.' Nor was there any large and well-organized party of individuals, keenly watching every turn in the fortunes of the question, to whom he could say, 'Here am I; send me, or send a better agent.' Without losing a single day, he started for London, taking his commission from the voice of Providence alone; and the country at large has had no ground of complaint, either that *he* went, or that he went so early. On reaching the city, his anxiety was not lessened when he learned who were the two principal representatives of the universities;—Sir David Brewster, whose peculiar zeal, influence, and European fame made him formidable, and Principal Haldane, who did thoroughly, and with all his soul and might, whatever he undertook. The former had a standing complaint against all British Governments, that they neglected every distinguished cultivator of science, whilst in France such a man was placed in high office to guide the counsels of the nation; and Sir David would not lose the rare opportunity of instructing and advising Government. Dr. Thomson was fully aware of 'the fearful odds' against him in his conflict with the champions of the universities. 'I wanted their name,' he afterwards said, in reference to this crisis; 'I wanted their talents; I wanted their learning; I wanted their influence with the great. Indeed, I wanted every advantage they had except one, which proved to be superior to all of theirs together—MINE WAS A BETTER CAUSE! This gave me courage; and I had also, long before, learned from the Bible that "the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." I had, indeed, something worse to contend with than either speed or strength. Representations the most unfounded and even unlikely were resorted to; and among these one of the most remarkable was, that *the Dissenters* wished the universities to have the monopoly of printing the Bible!' He found, at his first contact both with Government and with Scottish Liberals of the House of Commons, that the St.

Andrews deputies were carrying out their commission most effectually, and were plying to purpose their strange misrepresentation about the concurrence of Dissenters with their object. He was alarmed to find that not only a deep impression, but a 'foregone conclusion' favourable to that object, had been left on the minds of the leading members of the Cabinet, and of Liberal politicians generally. On his expressing a hope that the Bible patent for Scotland would be left to expire in the approaching July, and that no renewal of it—even in any modified form—either to individuals or to corporations would be sanctioned, he met with no affirmative, veiled under the usual ministerial reserve, but was reminded that pure and simple abolition was an extreme step—a revolution rather than a reform; that less would satisfy the country; that the four universities, though nobly laborious and deserving, were very poor, and had little more than nominal help from Government; that the Bible patent might be held by them under conditions which, whilst making Bibles sufficiently cheap, would, owing to the increase in the population, and the much larger sale of Bibles, yield a considerable revenue; and that it was better to have this revenue undivided and reserved for the promotion of literature and science by the universities, than to have it dispersed among a host of printers in individual shares that must be quite insignificant. He would not have been discouraged by the dignified reticence of Government in declining to say, then and to him, categorically, that the monopoly was to be abolished. He could make allowance for ministerial coyness and caution, and would have had no objection to the final doom of the monopoly being hinted at in the most approved style of official vagueness and circumlocution, and in dim prefiguration of the clear statement which was forthcoming in the imperial senate.

But the talk and manner of ministers impressed him with the idea that they contemplated granting the patent to the

universities. Some seemed to be *inclined* in this direction ; others to be *constrained* by motives of expediency. He quickly and surely, however, discovered those who had never wavered in their strong attachment to the cause of free Bible printing, or been moved by all the representations and solicitations of the university men ; and he wished that they had formed a majority and possessed paramount instead of subordinate power. It might be invidious to specify all who belonged to this class ; yet Dr. Thomson never failed to speak with great admiration of Lord Advocate Murray, and of his immediate successor, Lord Advocate Rutherford, who had shown none of the pliability ascribed to lawyers. Mr. Rutherford had a form and bearing the most commanding, though full of gracious dignity, and looked a grand ‘pillar of state ;’ and though as Lord Advocate he was virtually Home Secretary for Scotland, yet in any Scottish question that had been taken to the Cabinet for settlement, he possessed but little influence and still less authority, being overborne by the imperial magnates. There was another statesman, connected both with Government and with the representation of Scotland, the celebrated MACAULAY, whose convictions and sympathies, Dr. Thomson felt certain, were strongly on the side of free Bibles, and who, in the course of his copious, rapid, and brilliant talk, did not utter a single word in praise or palliation of the universities deriving that wealth which they needed, and which they could so profitably spend, from a Bible monopoly. These three men did not adopt, or even once repeat, any of the plausible arguments which the representatives of the universities were zealously urging. But in his interviews with the members of Government generally, Dr. Thomson found these arguments brought forward with tedious iteration ; Sir David Brewster’s facts, figures, and fictions being reproduced, as by his own kaleidoscope, in the ministerial language ; and the advocate of abolition overthrew them as

effectively as he could, yet as respectfully as if they had been each minister's peculiar views. The scheme of spreading 'literature and science' among *hundreds and thousands*, by checking the circulation of the Bible *among the millions*, was exposed, until some, who had lauded its generosity, seemed to be ashamed of its impiety, and its class selfishness and injustice. A Bible monopoly in Scotland might yield only several thousands a year, but it inflicted a tremendous deprivation, which neither that nor an incalculably larger sum could represent; why, then, should not Government make an annual grant to the universities of that sum out of the national exchequer, and leave the Bible free and without a tax? Was it possible to raise that small sum in a way so utterly indefensible and appalling as that which made Bibles high-priced and scarce to the hard-working population of Scotland? Even though the sum were devoted to the endowment of *churches for the poor*, a Bible patent, to furnish it, would be wrong and impolitic; but, devoted to 'literature and science' for a small section of the population—to a little more of intellectual culture for the college-bred,—how flagitious would be that Bible patent!

At the time of his holding interviews with cabinet ministers and members of Parliament, when he was strongly impressed with the likelihood of the universities' claims being granted, Dr. Thomson also prepared an emphatic memorial 'to be presented to Government on the subject' (on the 13th of May 1839), and to be sent, 'besides, to all the members of Parliament deemed likely to take an interest in the matter.' This memorial was subscribed, not only by himself, but by the Rev. Dr. David King ('then in London on other business'),—a well-known minister of one of the principal Secession congregations in Glasgow, where, however, his career as a brilliant preacher and platform orator was arrested by a long illness, during which he resigned his charge, so that the deeper and subtler power which his eloquence since acquired has unfortunately

been lost to Glasgow, though either there, or in Edinburgh, it would have been of pre-eminent advantage to the denomination, and the cause of evangelical truth and Christian union.¹

After he had exposed the utterly objectionable character of the proposal, ministers fell back upon the 'facts' with which they had been furnished by the St. Andrews deputation—that the country at large did not in the least object to it; that none of the Bible Societies had a single word against it; and that even the Scottish Dissenters were ready to acquiesce in it with positive approval. Dr. Thomson, whilst admitting that the country was rather undemonstrative, and that Bible Societies were completely silent, if not apathetic, about the patent being given to the universities, contended that the country and the Bible Societies had been equally dumb when the monopoly was held by two private individuals, Blair and Bruce; yet this fact neither justified the monopoly nor prevented Parliament and

¹ The conclusion of this strongly framed remonstrance is as follows:—
'That in reference to this proposal your memorialists beg leave most respectfully but most decidedly to state, that this would be to renew the monopoly in the most offensive form which could be devised; that it would be utterly to insult, and seriously to injure, the Dissenters; that it would be to outrage the best feelings of all pious and liberal men in the country, whether within or without the Establishment; and that it could not possibly be submitted to with patience in a country where the free circulation of the Divine Record is regarded as a privilege of paramount importance, and where many of the inhabitants, in days that are past, have shown themselves ready to suffer martyrdom rather than be bereft of spiritual rights which God has conferred, and which man can have no title of any kind to take away. Trusting that these representations, which, however strong, are no stronger than they think the exigency of the case requires, will be immediately taken into serious consideration, your memorialists have only, in conclusion, to state that nothing less will give entire satisfaction to the Dissenters, and all liberal men in Scotland, than that there be allowed a full and free competition in printing and publishing the word of God; that, however, in case, contrary to their view, any legislative measure be deemed necessary for securing the purity and accuracy of the text, the measure shall be applicable equally to Churchmen and Dissenters, as having precisely the same interest in the matter, and that no advantage shall be allowed to the present monopolists in England, in regard to duty on paper, which may prevent a fair competition between them and the future publishers of the Bible in Scotland.'

Government from agreeing to withhold it from the twain ; but he was astonished at the allegation that the Scottish Dissenters liked and commended the idea of the patent for the universities, —not less astonished, indeed, than if he had learned that the Dissenters had returned within the Establishment, and were flourishing in the richest benefices ! He was told that he might represent a few ‘grumblers ;’ but that ‘all enlightened Dissenters’ would submit without a murmur. In vain did he protest that he knew not only the general principles and sentiments of the various bodies of Dissenters, but also their special convictions regarding a Bible monopoly. In vain did he pledge his veracity that his own Church—the Secession—which formed by far the largest denomination of Dissenters in Scotland, zealously joined him in reprobating the claim of the universities. One day, when emphatically denying the acquiescence of Dissenters in that claim, he received from a cabinet minister the startling information, that ‘one of the most eminent of the Dissenting clergymen in Edinburgh had sanctioned it, and had expressed a belief that many of his brethren would do the same.’ Dr. Thomson thus narrates what followed : ‘Would your lordship tell me his name ? I asked. When he could not recollect, I mentioned a few of the names of leading Dissenters in Edinburgh, and among the rest that of the Rev. Dr. John Brown. “That is the man !” exclaimed his lordship. Feeling confident, from what I knew of the eminent and excellent individual thus named, that the report referred to could not be true, I now assumed a bolder tone, and very firmly maintained that the allegation must be groundless. “Then write to Edinburgh immediately,” said his lordship, “and have this well ascertained.” I promised to do so. There was at the time what was called “The Bible Monopoly Committee,” appointed by the United Associate Synod, of which I was convener. I wrote, calling a meeting of that committee. DR. JOHN BROWN presided at the meeting. And

immediately there came up to London a minute of the committee, containing the strongest and most indignant denial of the allegation that Dissenters wished the renewal of the monopoly in favour of the universities, *signed by the very man who, it had been maintained, was an avowed supporter of their plea!* This did more to confound the St. Andrews deputation and to open the eyes of the Government than anything else that could have been thought of, or in the most confident terms averred by me.' About this time, too, several petitions from the north, against giving the patent to the universities, reached Government, and helped to show how groundless was the statement that Scottish Dissenters favoured the views and aims of the St. Andrews deputation. Readers may wonder how truthful men, like Sir David Brewster and Principal Haldane, could advance and persist in such a statement in high quarters, and for the guidance of Government in a matter of grave importance. Dr. Thomson found that a trivial circumstance—'small as a grain of mustard-seed'—had, through the credulity of those two champions of the universities, who, from wishing a thing to be true, came to believe it, been magnified into the big allegation that Dissenters were on their side. In a gathering of Professors, the advantages to the universities of holding the monopoly were being discussed, along with such questions as, how it might be got, and what pressure of resistance might be expected. On looking at each other, and seeing that they were all staunch Churchmen, they naturally thought of Dissenters as opponents, and remembered that the declarations which Dissenters had lately made against the Bible monopoly were against it in every form—against it, whether as enriching individuals, or as enriching corporations. Their thoughts were thus turned upon the opposition to be offered by Dissenters, when Professor Pillans of Edinburgh interposed to remark, that of late the Dissenting laity and clergy had shown an ardent zeal for the highest culture in connection

with pulpit instruction, and were insisting strongly on a learned ministry. Would they not therefore rejoice to see the Scottish universities with resources for more effective teaching and training? For his own part, he felt sure that Dr. John Brown, and all his able and learned brethren in the Secession, would cordially approve of the profits of Bible printing being employed with the aim of rendering their young men more accomplished expositors and preachers. Professor Pillans himself had been bred within the Secession, and perhaps imagined that he could divine what Seceders would or should do. At all events, this gratuitous hint by Mr. Pillans, of what *he* thought Dr. Brown and other Dissenters *should* do in the matter, was the only foundation for the broad and unqualified statement that Dr. Brown and all the Scottish Dissenters supported the claim of the universities for the Bible patent! As a proof of how easily the members of Government could be misled by such a preposterous statement about Scottish Dissenters, we may mention that, a month later, when Government announced the arrangements in connection with the new Board for supervising the printing of the Scriptures—arrangements which were grossly offensive to Dissenters, by excluding all but Churchmen from that Board,—it was answered for Government that they believed Dissenters to be quite indifferent ‘about the purity of the authorized version!’ Government regarded the Scottish Dissenters as altogether careless about the accuracy of the common English version of the Bible, though this was the version which Dissenters used as invariably as Churchmen; and their apathy was believed to spring from the consideration that it was the *authorized version*! Statesmen who held this notion about the Dissenters of Scotland might easily be duped into the other belief, that these Dissenters approved of the four universities obtaining the Bible patent. Ample evidence, however, of Dissenting hostility to every other settlement of this monopoly except its utter abolition, was thrust and kept

before the eyes of Government. Still, Dr. Thomson had reason to fear that—as lately, on the great question of *church extension* in Scotland, Government had yielded to the views and wishes of Dissenters rather than to those of Churchmen—political ‘expediency’ might suggest the apparently equal-handed, yet the really ‘double-minded,’ policy of now doing, in the case of the Bible monopoly, exactly the reverse, and of gratifying Churchmen and disappointing Dissenters. Should not each of the contending parties be made in turn to ‘receive both evil and good from the hands’ of Government? And might not both, when striking a balance between the good and the evil, conclude that they had, on the whole, been dealt with kindly? A little foreknowledge of the memorable repulse which both Whig and Tory cabinets were soon to give to the *non-intrusion and spiritual independence* claims of the Church of Scotland, might have conspired, with the recollection of the resistance which had been offered to the Church Extension Scheme, to induce ministers in 1839 to please Churchmen by granting, as they urged, the patent to the universities. So many thousands sterling a year (Sir D. Hunter always stated his profits thus vaguely) from the ‘privilege’ would have provided an annual endowment of more than £200 for *many new Professors*, all of whom, according to the ‘tests,’ must have been Churchmen. This would have been a ‘sop’ to the Church, disguised as a bounty to the universities.

Dr. Thomson had remained in London much longer than he had expected or cared to be; but he could not think of leaving whilst the St. Andrews deputies were present—there pressing their suit with redoubled energy, and whilst he was the only Abolitionist on the spot to watch them, to follow after them, and to confute their pleas, before a Government which, when not undecided and halting, seemed to incline strongly to their side. Instead of withdrawing his single strength from the scene where the cause, dear to his heart, was in a most

critical situation, he wished that his individual ability and influence had been multiplied a thousandfold, or that a Dissenting host occupied his place. The last week of his London visit was crowded with the most intense anxieties and labours, for he feared, and struggled desperately against, a ministerial decision in favour of the universities' claim; but, to use his own words,¹ 'One night, while I and my opponents from St. Andrews were sitting, though at a respectful distance from each other, under the gallery of the House of Commons, they must have been utterly confounded, but I was inexpressibly delighted, to hear Lord John Russell, in answer to a question put by Sir James Graham about this Scotch monopoly, declare that the Government had now come to the determination that the monopoly should not be renewed in favour of any individual or corporation whatever. Great cheering from some parts of the House followed this announcement, and no one would have cheered louder than myself if I had dared. Lord John added, that "they did not mean to prevent in Scotland the Scriptures being sold at the lowest price; but they did mean to prevent the purity of the text from interpolation and misconstruction, and the means he should state on a future day."' After conveying his acknowledgments to Lord John Russell, the Doctor returned home, rejoicing in the success of his mission.²

¹ Spoken at the public dinner given to him by his fellow-townsmen of Coldstream in 1844, when upwards of a hundred of them, along with many other friends from various parts of the country, attended to do him honour for his exertions against and triumph over the Bible monopoly.

² The letter to Lord John, after referring to a number of accompanying documents which contained evidence of the correctness of statements which the writer had advanced, goes on: 'I think it right, at the same time, as representing a very large body of Dissenters in Scotland, to express my grateful acknowledgments for the announcement which I had the high satisfaction to hear your lordship, in your place in Parliament last night, make as to the intention of Her Majesty's Government on the subject. This announcement was the more gratifying to me as showing that the secret but strenuous efforts made by the friends of the monopoly of the Scriptures, notwithstanding the illiberal proposals they led to in some quarters, have

‘All’s well that ends well;’ and the Government came to a righteous decision, though by hesitating steps, and after some intermediate movements which had been in a different direction. It cannot be matter of surprise that, under the pressure of solicitation, intrigue, and influence on behalf of the Universities scheme, they faltered and halted; but the fact that they resisted that pressure, and granted free Bible printing, should have drawn towards them national gratitude. In the following year the same Government introduced penny postage; yet for the two social boons of inestimable value—cheap Bibles and cheap letters—there was neither a popular nor a party ovation; and, strangely enough, the members of Government, when enumerating and glorying in their various achievements, were silent about those two that were the most important!

All that remained when Dr. Thomson left London, was the devising of arrangements to secure the *accuracy* of the sacred text under free printing;—arrangements which were quite superfluous, but were designed to meet the wild fears that competition would encourage spurious versions; and surely Government might be trusted to provide such arrangements as should be unmarked by the gratuitous sectarianism of giving advantage and showing favour to Churchmen, and of wronging and insulting Dissenters. The Doctor had no suspicion that, for the new function of guarding the purity of the English Bible, Churchmen alone would be set forth as eligible; and his reliance upon ministerial impartiality might have been justified, but for the interposition of Churchmen, who, having been defeated on the claim of the universities to the patent,

yet ultimately and completely failed to produce their intended effect. I shall have great pleasure in assuring those for whom I act, that all further agitation on the subject is now unnecessary, in consequence of the excellent measure which your Lordship has proposed, and which, I have no doubt, the Government will in due time mature, and be able to carry. This will be hailed with gratitude as a boon of paramount importance to all the well-disposed classes, but especially to the poor in Scotland.’

solicited Government to annex to the new system such restrictions as, if they did not *fetter* competition, would at least *brand* the Dissenters, and secure an ascendancy for Churchmen. When the champion of abolition was, in his Border home, free from anxiety, except as to the best plans for enabling the country to receive at once the fruits of victory, Churchmen were besieging Government with counsels of exclusiveness, whilst the Government imagined that these counsels related to a small point—the constitution of a Board for supervising the sacred text; and that yielding to them, even though they should be somewhat sinister, could do little harm! How successfully the suggestions had been urged, was soon apparent. Dr. Thomson had attended a meeting of Synod, and there made a statement about his late proceedings in London, and the triumphant issue; and his brethren shared his satisfaction. ‘I returned home,’ he says in his report, ‘on Thursday, the 13th of June. But the very day following, and while the Synod was yet sitting, the ill-advised announcement of Government as to the way in which it was proposed to carry the abolition of the Bible monopoly into effect, was received. [The Synod at once remonstrated in a strong memorial.] In the meantime, various communications having been sent to me from London, intimating the necessity of making prompt and vigorous exertions to counteract, if possible, the plan proposed by Her Majesty’s ministers, and not aware that the Synod had received intelligence so as to take any steps before separating, I called a meeting of the Bible Monopoly Committee on the Tuesday following. Different members of Parliament having by this time written to urge the necessity of despatching another deputation to London with the least possible loss of time, Mr. Harper and I were accordingly appointed to set off next day.’¹ On reaching London, they found Government

¹ In the preceding month, Dr. T. had hastened to London to oppose the universities’ deputation; and the ‘Synod’s Committee (as was intimated to

apparently resolved to abide by the scheme which had been announced by Lord Melbourne in the House of Lords, and by Lord John Russell in the House of Commons. In an interview with Lord John, the deputation reminded his lordship that he had taken a laudable part in the repeal of the Corporation and Tests Acts, but that, in the case of the proposed Bible Board, he was partially renewing those Acts, by raising a small corporation, and making *Churchmanship* the sole passport to it! 'Some days after,' says Dr. Thomson, 'we were admitted to an interview with the Premier, Lord Melbourne, who met us with great frankness, and seemed to be in what the Scotch describe as "great glee." "What is it you want?" began his lordship. "Do you want to be the Established Church yourselves?" We answered, *No*, and urged the same arguments as before Lord John; but the Premier, still maintaining his facetious mood and tone, replied that "it was strange how some people would talk about things that did not concern them;" and that "the Tests and Corporations Acts had never extended to Scotland." "But, my lord," was the rejoinder, "the Scotch are rather of migratory habits, and some of them come to England at times; and if they applied to Government, they could not get the most contemptible office until they had renounced the religion of their country." "Well, then," asked his lordship, "what is it you want?" "We wish your lordship to refer to the statement you made in the House of Lords the other night on the subject of the Scottish Bible monopoly," was the answer. But his

him by Mr. James Peddie), at the same time that they approved highly of his measures in London, and his indefatigable prosecution of them, felt themselves obliged to minute *their disapproval* of his having gone to London without consulting them. Their sole object in this is to guard against this being held as a precedent.' He never saw cause to *regret his promptitude* on that occasion. Mr. Peddie mentions, in the same letter, that 'Dr. Brown had a call to-day from Professor Pillans, who said he had understood that he was friendly to a transference of the patent to the universities; but Dr. B. put him right upon this.'

lordship could not recollect what he had said, and we were compelled to tell him who he had stated were to be at the head of the Board for superintending the printing of Bibles. It looked as if he had simply been told by others what to say in Parliament about the Board, and as if the propriety or impropriety of it had never troubled him! When the deputation came to mention the names of the proposed members of the Board, at the head of whom were the Lord Advocate and the Solicitor-General, he mused for a moment. "The Lord Advocate!" he exclaimed; "why, what a strange thing they have done, to make the Lord Advocate and the Solicitor-General superintendents of the printing of Bibles! what do they know about the Bible?" Dr. Thomson knew well that, under this free-and-easy demeanour, and an affectation of flippancy, indifference, and indolence, Lord Melbourne concealed the finest abilities, which had also been sedulously cultivated, and largely engrossed with questions of statesmanship; and that the gay trifler, who paraded his ignorance and carelessness about the constitution of the Bible Board, was all the time keenly scrutinizing the deputies, and testing their statements.

It was at length resolved that a deputation of eight Scottish members of Parliament should wait on Lord John Russell to support the amendments that had been urged by Drs. Thomson and Harper. The former, however, modified these amendments so far as to propose retaining the Moderator of the General Assembly in the constitution of the Board. Dr. Thomson, though strongly objecting to this alteration, accompanied the eight M.P.s to the Home Office; and 'it was then,' he says, 'in the critical circumstances in which I was placed, and when not knowing well what to do, I ventured, as the last resort now left me, to request the members to lay before Lord John Russell another "proposal."¹ I waited,' he continues,

¹ Viz.—'That any Episcopal clergyman, if attested by his bishop, and any Dissenting minister, if attested by his Presbytery, or, if not a Pres-

‘ with great anxiety for the return of the members, when I had the satisfaction to learn that Lord John entertained the proposal very favourably. Some days after I received an official letter from the Lord Advocate, enclosing what he designates the “ultimate resolution of the Government, as far as the Dissenters are concerned;” adding, that it was “in substance” what I proposed. . . . Whatever it may be “in substance,” it is certainly not in its details in conformity with what I proposed. When it was first read to me in London, I strongly urged that neither a copy of the editions printed from, nor the proof-sheets edited by Dissenters, should be sent to the secretary of the Board of Churchmen; but it was replied that the lodging of the editions and proof-sheets with the secretary was merely for the convenience of the Lord Advocate, who, as Lord Advocate, had no official secretary of his own; that it was with him only that Dissenters had to transact; and that, in a word, the Board was to have no control of any kind over them. Dissenting editors and publishers, indeed, will have this manifest advantage over those who choose to deal with the Board—that there will, in no case, be any delay occasioned by having to wait for its *imprimatur*. They have merely “to transmit the proof-sheets for the inspection of the Secretary,” and then, “without further licence, the Bible may be freely published.” My proposal was so framed as to include *all* Dissenters in Scotland, as well as Episcopalians, Presbyterians,

byterian, by a given number of his ministerial brethren, shall, on applying for the privilege, be allowed to act as editor of the authorized version of Bibles, Testaments, Psalms, in terms of the recommendation of the Select Committee, on finding security, etc., for the conformity of the text with the version now printed by Her Majesty’s Printers in Scotland, or what he shall judge the most correct of the editions printed by authority in England.’ When Dr. T. was asked by one of the eight members of Parliament, ‘Can you say that you are authorized by the Dissenters of Scotland to make this proposal?’ he replied, ‘Certainly not; I am merely authorized to do the best I can in the circumstances of the case; and, under all the circumstances, this appears to me to be the best.’

Independents, and Baptists. I insisted on this. The point was still under consideration when I left London ; and for the ultimate determination, which I much regret, the Lord Advocate merely says, "he could not go beyond *known* denominations ; and therefore limited it to Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists." One of the reasons which led me to fix on *ministers* as editors on the part of Dissenters was, that the object of those who had framed the constitution of the Board proposed by Government (and I know that some Established Churchmen were very busy in the matter) was to humble and mortify Dissenting ministers, by not suffering them to be recognised as fitted or entitled to superintend the publication of the Bible. That object is now not only defeated, but each Dissenting editor will have the same power of supervision as the whole Church Board together ; and indeed, as far as they are concerned, the design and working of the Board's constitution will be neutralized. . . . Nor will it be denied that the superintendence of a Dissenting minister may tend to secure greater accuracy, and the strictest conformity to the best editions. And while many, from the superabundance of their labours in their proper sphere, may not have it in their power to engage in such a work, yet in cases where it can be done by a minister, I can think of no employment more fitted to promote the grand object of his ministerial labours, by storing his memory with the language, and imbuing his mind with the spirit, of the Bible.

‘ In regard to the practical working of the ultimate Government plan, I have learned from some most likely to give a sound opinion, that Bibles may be printed at a cheaper rate, and with much more beauty of typography and convenience of size, than any hitherto in use among us. I mean, however, to extend my inquiries ; and I may perhaps be allowed to say that no labour which I can give, and no expense which I can bear, will in the meantime be spared, in order to attain the

great object in view.'—*From Statement before the Synod, written 13th July 1839.*

We learn from a 'private' letter from the Lord Advocate, dated 'London, 15th July 1839,' that 'a committee of the General Assembly' had appeared in London to express dissatisfaction 'with any alteration of the scheme as originally announced;' yet at the same time to propose that 'all parties should be put upon the same footing as to the mode of obtaining licence,' viz. that Churchmen should, like the Dissenters, get their licence from the Lord Advocate! They also proposed that there should be 'left with the Board, as patentees, *a discretionary power* of interfering *without cause shown*, and of interdicting, in virtue of their patent, the publication of any Bible, as to the accuracy of which they were dissatisfied.' This latter proposal was utterly rejected by the Lord Advocate, who would not yield to the Board any control except upon cause shown, and who maintained that the 'discretionary power' asked was unreasonable, and might be mischievous. His lordship concludes by intimating that 'the patent and relative instructions have been ordered to be drawn out in the way which will give all Dissenters, whether clergymen or laymen, and of every denomination, the right of publishing, under licence from the Lord Advocate, and under conditions which will not affect the freest competition, a faithful edition of the authorized version.' In a postscript he adds that, to fill the office of secretary of the Board, 'we have in view one who, though a Churchman, has an integrity and impartiality which will give satisfaction to all parties.'

The Bible Board, though signally amended in its constitution and conditions, was theoretically objectionable; still, as Dr. Thomson never failed to admit, its operation was faultless, and had not interfered with the utmost freedom of Bible printing. There was, indeed, no call for any Board. The machinery of superintendence by lawyers and clergymen, and

their 'readers,' is cumbrous and wholly unnecessary, since free competition is the best security for accurate printing; and a Government Board, like the monopoly itself, rests on the baseless assumption that the Bible, or at least the 'authorized version,' is the copyright of the Crown. It was appointed, however, to allay much of real, but far more of pretended, apprehension of careless and spurious editions of Scripture spreading over all the land,—a danger completely imaginary, whether the alarm was genuine or hypocritical. To this unnecessary Board was given a sectarian constitution by placing on it the Established clergy, without any of their Dissenting neighbours; yet, to the latter, it might be regarded as highly complimentary, that they were *passed over* when appointments were made, if not to a sinecure, at least to a superfluous and useless post of superintendence. Still, the country cannot be too grateful, that the widely mischievous monopoly has been succeeded by a Board which, however sectarian its constitution and unnecessary its function, has never offered the least obstruction to the freest competition, or done anything to make Bibles high-priced and scarce. Not a single fetter of the monopoly remained to check the circulation and cheapening of the Scriptures; and the prodigious multiplication of Bibles, and the not less remarkable reduction of their prices which ensued, showed what a mighty and wicked hindrance the monopoly had been to the 'free course' of the word of the Lord,—a hindrance such as the Court of Rome might have devised and maintained.

It might have been expected that the Bible Society would have early sought to remove that hindrance which lay mischievously across its path. At every meeting of the parent or branch associations, directors and agents had been forward to expose the machinations of Popery against the dissemination of the Scriptures, and had detailed instances of priests burning the Bible, and forbidding the possession of a single

copy. Surely, then, those zealous distributors of the Bible would not fail to condemn a system which practically kept back, not only from the country a full half of the Bibles that should, and otherwise would, have belonged to it, but also from the Society itself, a full half of the Bibles that had been paid for by the Society's funds. These went as much to enrich the patentees as to procure Bibles. Robert Hall, in a well-known speech, had described the Bible Society as possessing 'every characteristic of a work of God, in which the simplest means produce the greatest effects, where there is the utmost economy in the contrivance, and the greatest magnificence in the design,—Omnipotence placing opulence in the end, and parsimony in the means.' But instead of 'economy' and 'parsimony in the means,' and 'opulence in the end' of the Bible Society, the monopoly caused more than a half of the funds that had been raised over all the country, and that included the widow's mite and the rich man's offering, to be *wasted* (as they were, to the Society, in being thrown into the monopolists' profits), and less than half of the Bibles to be obtained. Yet the directors and earnest supporters of the Society did nothing, and said nothing, against this patent. Nor could it be alleged that it wore any aspect of party politics which bound them over to neutrality and silence. The monopoly did not involve either a Whig or a Tory principle, or favour either the Whig or the Tory party. It was equally free from Church politics, giving none of its revenue to the Establishment, and making its Bibles no cheaper to Churchmen than to Dissenters. The Bible Society, observing most scrupulously its professed impartiality between Whig and Tory, Churchmen and Dissenters, might have been engaged in fighting resolutely against the monopoly. It held aloof, however, from all opposition ; and from its deportment before, and especially *after* the abolition of the Scottish patent, it might have been judged to be indifferent about the grand advantages of free printing.

Unquestionably, it would have been an honourable fact in the history of the Bible Society if it had taken a leading part in the struggle for free and cheap Bibles, or if it had at least encouraged those who did. Dr. Thomson never ascribed any blame to the Society for its passive attitude *previous to July 1839, when the monopoly was abolished*,—never expressed any surprise that an influential association, long engaged in expending a vast annual income on the distribution of Bibles among the needy millions, had not been more forward than the various Churches of the land, to demand the extinction of a ‘privilege’ which made Bibles dear and scarce ; but he showed that he was greatly astonished and somewhat indignant at the Society’s *subsequent* proceedings, to which, in their proper place, we shall briefly advert. He was slow and most unwilling to cast a shadow of blame upon the noble institution, refraining from suggesting that its experience from 1804 to 1839 ought to have constrained it into the field against the mightiest and most indefensible obstructions which it had encountered in the way of Bible circulation. From the Society, however, he got no thanks for this forbearance, any more than for his memorable efforts in emancipating and cheapening the Bible. Christians, and Christian corporations, keenly alive to the injury which even such indirect eulogy as the expression of gratitude might inflict on the spiritual character of a brother, by spoiling his humility and contentment, have often abstained from giving him the praise which was his due ; and in the present case the Bible Society may have been thus delicately considerate, though, in reference to all its aristocratic Presidents and their services, it indulged in the most liberal and undisguised laudation.

On the complete abolition of the Scottish Bible monopoly, Dr. Thomson did not pause either to congratulate himself, or to convince the public that he had borne a principal share in the achievement. Let his past labour speak for itself. He was

earnestly bent on supplementing it, and on making the free Bibles also the cheapest that were possible.¹

Immediately on the announcement of Lord John Russell that the Scottish patent would not be renewed in favour either of individuals or of corporations, the price of Bibles fell from *twenty to forty per cent.*!—a reduction which confessed how exorbitantly the monopolists had all along hitherto charged for the Bible, and which indicated what savings might have been effected by Bible Societies, if these, during the preceding thirty years, could have purchased Bibles on the cheap terms now proposed. The reduction might also be taken as the very lowest which the late printers of the Queen were disposed to

¹ The following letter from Mr. Childs has a special interest. Readers will be pleased with its reference to the *Canadian* prisoners, for whom Dr. T. had exerted himself:—

‘LONDON, *July 13, 1839.*

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,—You will be happy to know that I went into Newgate this morning with my friend Mr. Ashurst, and heard their *pardon* read to the Canadians. They were released this afternoon, and Mr. Parker and Mr. Wixon have been here dining with me, and are gone to a lodging taken for them by Mr. A., where they may remain till their departure on Wednesday. I have just sent to Mr. Tidman to inform him they will worship God and return thanks for their deliverance in his place to-morrow, if all be well. How wonderfully God has appeared for these people, my dear friend! When I first saw them in January, all things appeared to be against them; but all has been overruled for good. . . .

‘At the time you left on Monday evening, Lord John was making known to the House of Commons, in your own words, the plan proposed by yourself and adopted by him, to my amazement. Most heartily do I congratulate you on the termination of the event!—so decidedly honourable to yourself in every way. I do not expect you will approve of all that I have done; but I felt it to be my duty to address a letter to the *Pilot* on the subject, calling attention to the liberty taken with you, and the manner in which you were humbugged when in concert with the London Societies, and the absolute triumph of your cause when conducted with single-handed integrity, intelligence, and energy. If it shall happen that you do not approve of all I have said, I am sure you ought; because without you, and with you if you had left it to the fellows here, Scotland’s Dissenters would have now appeared the degraded things which, on the Bible subject, the English Dissenters have appeared in my eyes for nine years past. It is due to you to say I was fairly rejoiced when I saw Lord John’s declaration;

exhibit in the free trade market. They had formerly by 'privilege' had the whole Bible trade to themselves; and now, when it was thrown open, they, doubtless in concert with their more fortunate brethren in England, fixed upon such cheap prices as should discourage adventurers from entering into competition, though in this they miscalculated; for in the low rate at which they began to offer Bibles, Dr. Thomson soon found *a lower, and a lower, and a lower still*, compared with which their inaugural reduction under free trade was trivial, and resembled a fluctuation under the old monopoly. The

because I could see, from his answers to Sir James Graham, that he meant the thing should be done. Scotland ought to have a day of rejoicing and thanksgiving, and, as I said to a friend to whom I wrote in Edinburgh, "you ought to have a monument"—the *Thomson Monument*. "That, sir," the guides would say, "is erected to honour a man by whose honest energy and skill Scotland was freed from the most degrading tyranny—that of a monopoly in printing the word of God." The tablet should bear that memorable sentence of yours on the first day of your examination: "All monopolies are bad; of all monopolies, *religious* monopolies are the worst; and of all religious monopolies, a monopoly of the word of God is the most outrageous."

'*Sunday Evening*, half-past 10 o'clock.—It has been a day to be remembered. In January Mr. Tidman prayed earnestly before his people for those men by designation; and I thought it right they should there worship on their release, and return their thanks to God for their remarkable deliverance. I let Mr. Tidman know their wish as soon as I saw them out; and it would have done you good to have heard him, for about ten minutes in the midst of his prayer, invoke the divine blessing upon them, and the events which have passed and are passing in relation to them. How plainly everything demonstrates that there is a God who rules in the earth! His sermon, which could not have been prepared for the occasion, was admirably appropriate to it,—“a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance,”—showing the nature of the liberty and pardon proclaimed under the gospel, and so on. But pray excuse me for amusing you with accounts of sermons, who can concoct them as easily as the Government used to make *salt permits*. It was a great trial to the poor men to leave Grant and Miller in their cell. My friend, Mr. A., if he live, however, will go about their release, now that he has got the nine away. Mr. Parker has been spending the day with me at my brother-in-law's. He is a gentleman and a Christian. I can add no more now. May you now enjoy the peace from your late turmoil which you well deserve.

‘JOHN CHILDS.

‘To the Rev. Dr. Adam Thomson, Coldstream.’

Scottish monopoly ceased on the 19th July 1839; and on the 15th August of the same year, Principal John Lee stated to the Commission of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, that 'by the introduction of Bibles from England,' in that short space of *less than a month*, 'the price of the best Scottish editions had fallen forty per cent.'¹

Why, then, it may be asked, and has often been asked, did not Dr. Thomson rest satisfied with what had been done, trusting that free competition would inevitably bring about and perpetuate the greatest possible cheapening of the Scriptures? For the plain reason, that he did not believe that, in the cir-

¹ Mr. Childs, in a letter from Bungay, dated 12th November 1839, has a curious comment on Dr. Lee's statement. The letter opens solemnly, marking the day 'as the *fifty-second* anniversary of his father's death,' and certifying that, though the writer was 'left a fatherless infant, goodness and mercy had followed him all the days of his life.' After acknowledging the receipt of Dr. Thomson's prospectus of 'The Scottish Board for Bible Circulation,' and saying about it, 'I see you have hit upon the only plan that can make the abolition of the monopoly efficient,' he goes on to remark: 'I understand thoroughly all the motives and actions which will be put in motion to bring by degrees the monopoly back in substance, if not in form; and I even question very much whether the fact stated by Dr. Lee be true, that the *best* editions are reduced in price by forty per cent. I know Dr. Lee is not with us in heart; and I can easily imagine that if he can get it to be believed that the prices are reduced, he may think our vigilance will be laid to sleep. I have not forgotten his first evidence, my call upon him in Edinburgh, nor his letter to you, explaining to you why he had eaten his own words. . . . Before the 25th, if I am alive and well, you shall have four specimens set up in type, the cost of a set of plates for each, and the cost, under the present price of paper, for the Bibles of each edition in quires.' Dr. Lee might not, as a retiring scholar, show much zeal in the struggle against the monopoly; but why he should have been suspected of secretly sympathizing with the monopolists, and abetting their cause by equivocal reports, we cannot conjecture. The writer was rather prone to look into the 'heart' of neighbours, and to judge severely. In the same letter he mentions as 'a remarkable fact, that all classes of Dissenters are in energy, knowledge, and judgment very much what they are made by their ministers;' and adds, that he lately had talked with a gentleman who, 'after passing some time among most, if not all, the Dissenting ministers in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, remarked that *the people were very badly led*, and were not in such a state as he could have wished to see.' A rather sweeping conclusion!

cumstances, there would be such competition in Scotland as should at once secure the cheapest possible Bibles. The emancipation of the Bible might *inevitably*, yet neither *speedily* nor *completely*, be followed by a cheapening. There were, he strongly feared, several causes in operation which would prevent, or at least retard, the development of free trade in Bibles; and whilst, in reference to other commodities, patience might be exercised in waiting for the full expansion of commerce, he felt how seriously any considerable failure in procuring the cheapest possible Bibles would restrict the circulation of the word of life among the millions that needed it; and how appalling to innumerable families would it be to have that word withheld! It was afterwards affirmed, in the first Report issued by Her Majesty's Board of Superintendence for Bible Printing, that 'a very small diminution of price acquires a magnitude and importance essentially different from what can be predicated in respect of any other article of sale. The difference of *a single penny* in the price of a Bible determines, year after year, whether the word of God is or is not to enlighten and gladden thousands of families.' Dr. Thomson believed that, unless collateral measures were taken to neutralize certain dangers surrounding the infancy of free trade, and to stimulate its growth to maturity, the cheapness which was possible would not be reached, and that Bibles would be dearer than they might and should be—not by 'a single penny,' but by many pence; and the result of this—the much narrower circulation of the Bible, keeping many 'thousands of families' from being 'enlightened and gladdened' by the word of salvation—would be a stupendous calamity, which a Christian philanthropist should put forth all his energies to avert. Then, and at a still later stage, he had also, for his interference with the natural development of free trade, this ample vindication, that when he mentioned the low prices at which Bibles could be produced for the million, all the representatives of the Bible trade in

Scotland—the printers, the binders, and the sellers—agreed in regarding him as a visionary, and his prices as absurdly impracticable, though he subsequently proved that he was in the right, and even brought Bibles considerably beneath the low prices he had named. What those men believed to be utopian and impossible, they would not for a long time have attempted,—they would not have produced the cheap Bibles which he had described,—since, according to their calculation, the prices were ruinously low. ‘They can conquer who believe they can;’ and, on the other hand, they who not only despair of an undertaking, but judge it to be impracticable to all others as well as to themselves, are not likely to accomplish it. The actual prices of the trade have now for many years been still more incredible; and they would never have been reached unless a pioneer of far stronger faith and more zealous enterprise had led the way. The unbelief of ‘the trade’ was based on a mistaken supposition, that there would *not* be an immense number of purchasers and readers of Bibles when these were cheap enough. But Dr. Thomson was assured that the reduction of price would not appeal to the Scotch population in vain; and he also felt a heavy responsibility resting upon him to secure the greatest reduction, and bring the precious Book as near as possible to the scantiest means in the land. ‘When,’ says the Doctor, ‘on the abolition of the patent, I assured the public that one of the sorts of Bibles most in use (the 24mo pocket Bible, bound in thin bossed roan, with gilt edges), which had before sold at 5s., would, on my plan, be reduced to 2s. 6d., many were delighted, but more listened incredulously, and maintained that my prediction could not possibly be realized; and yet that Bible has been reduced to *tenpence*,—five-sixths below the monopolist price, and even two-thirds below what was reckoned my sanguine and groundless anticipation!’

What in the autumn of 1839 he projected with a view to the widest Bible circulation, is, along with his reasons, described

in the following extract (which we have abridged) from his 'Letter to Lord Bexley on the Bible monopoly as inconsistent with Bible circulation,' published in 1840:—

'It was taken for granted by many, that after the abolition of the monopoly, nothing further was necessary to gain all its advantages, than to leave the Bible to be furnished by competition. Free trade in Bibles, it was alleged, would, like free trade in everything else, reduce the price to the lowest degree consistent with a profit to traders. One object, however, contemplated by me, was, as far as possible, to take the Bible, as a source of profit, out of the hands of traders. The free gift, and, next to the Saviour whom it reveals, the best gift of Heaven to men, is like nothing else, and must not, as if it were an ordinary commodity, be subjected to the ordinary rules of commerce.¹

¹ 'Dr. Thomson is not satisfied to leave the matter of Bible printing and circulation to free trade ; and in his view we concur. In all matters of an earthly origin and object it is enough to abolish the monopoly, and there to leave such matters to the nutriment and care of cupidity and competition. Demand will find supply at the lowest possible living profit. On these terms, too, we shall have Bibles in abundance ; but before a copy reaches the peasant's cottage, so many will come in for a share of that profit, as greatly to add to the cost, price of paper, print, and binding. Free trade will be a mighty improvement upon monopoly ; but when it has done its utmost, it will leave much to be desired on the score of cheapness for the Sunday schools of Britain, and the millions of her poor. The great feature of Dr. Thomson's scheme is, that its expenditure ends where that of free trade begins, namely, with the prime cost. His object is to divert the Word of Life from the channel, and to rescue it from the chains of commerce ; to place it on the foundation on which it rested when it fell from the inspired lips of the prophets, and when the apostolic letters were delivered into the hands of the primitive Churches. It was then beneath the notice of kings and commercial companies ; and the cost of diffusion was simply the cost of transcription. This point is most ably argued by a man of high speculative and practical ability. He tells the reverend projector that, even on the free trade principle, "before the Scriptures came to the poor, they will have been taxed to the extent of forty-five or fifty per cent. above the original cost ;" and he maintains that the difficulty in the way of cheap circulation never can be overcome if the Bible is still to be made a question of mercantile speculation.'—*Patriot*.

‘But there was another thing it was easy to foresee. The old monopolists could produce editions much cheaper than any other trading company. With a large stock of Bibles on hand, printed on paper duty free, and with the whole apparatus of moveable types, stereotypes, presses, etc., ready, and in actual service, who could compete with them? They would see it good policy to submit to a temporary reduction of price, to intimidate all who would have been their rivals. But when the fear of competition was at an end, they would be found virtually to retain the monopoly, and thus have it in their power again to raise the price of Bibles, as far as the competition by importation from England would allow.

‘And then let it be remembered that none but monopolist Bibles could be imported from England ; and an arrangement between the parties might have been made to answer the purpose of both, and leave the public to pay for all. Those in England, sympathizing with their humbled brother and sister in the north—and the more so, seeing that their own day was coming—might easily have helped them, without the fear of injuring, or rather, with the prospect of benefiting themselves. The market, at least in Ireland and the Colonies, being equally open to both, they might have agreed to supply it at a price which would have defied all ordinary competition ; and yet, by the immensity of the sale, even with small profits, for a time might have secured handsome returns from the first ; but taking care to increase the profits in proportion as they found that they were likely to have none to oppose them in their trading speculations in the most sacred of all things. Is there anything unlikely or uncharitable in such conjectures, when it is considered how they contrived, in time past, to tax the public “by exacting tribute from the world’s salvation,” and “converting into such profitable merchandise the charter of man’s redemption, the record of God’s mercy, and of Christ’s blood?”

‘Should it be maintained that no such coalition was ever

likely to take place between the English monopolists and the *quondam* patentees in Scotland, still I must revert to the fact that the latter could, without any such aid, have easily prevented any general or effective competition in Scotland.¹

‘Now, to prevent those and other evils, and to insure the publication of Bibles at the cheapest possible rate, for the benefit of the whole community, it is proposed that some such plan as the following should be adopted :—

‘I. That a subscription should be opened, and congregational collections made, for the purpose of raising a fund to purchase sets of stereotype plates for printing four different editions of the Bible, viz. :

‘1. A POCKET BIBLE, of more convenient size and better type than those in common use.

‘2. A SCHOOL BIBLE, which might be sold in separate portions, for the use of various classes of scholars, to lessen expense to parents, and prevent the deterioration of the whole volume by children when perusing parts of it.

‘3. An OCTAVO BIBLE, with large type, for the use of the aged ; and

‘4. A QUARTO BIBLE, for the use of families.

‘It appears, from the evidence of practical men, that not a very large sum would be required for this purpose ; and if such a sum could be raised, then these editions of the Bible could be sold at the small sum which would be required merely for paper and press-work. This would make all purchasers of the

¹ ‘It is clear that free trade, in relation to the Bible, cannot really operate in Scotland without a considerable multiplication of the competitors, and, consequently, of the population of that country. It is probable that the price of the Bible, under the *quondam* and the *quasi* monopolists, will not only not be exorbitant, but cheaper than small private publishers could issue them ; yet there will be no other power to keep them in check but that of the English monopolists. Under these circumstances, it were preposterous to look to free trade, which will be only a name without a substance, for that reduction in the cost of the Book of Life which is desirable, and, according to Dr. Thomson, practicable.’—*Patriot*.

Bible independent of the apprehended schemes of the old monopolists, and would render competition on their part impossible, so long as it is their object to realize a large profit on the sale of the word of God.

‘II. That, to insure a sale of Bibles sufficient to defray the expense of printing them, it is proposed that each congregation should give a portion of its funds for religious purposes, to be repaid, if required, in Bibles at the regular price, which, according to the proposed plan, would just be the cost price. Were only a proportion of Christian congregations throughout the country to give, at an average, £5 (and numbers might give much more), thousands of pounds would be raised for the object in view. All Bible, and Missionary, and School Societies would find it their interest to subscribe to a much greater amount on a similar condition. And were the young connected with Sabbath schools and others, in subscribing to Congregational Societies for religious purposes at the rate of a penny a week or upwards, to have the promise of being furnished with a Bible (of whichever of the editions to be issued they might choose), as soon as they had in this way paid for the price of it, they might be induced to take a deeper interest in those Societies, and to continue their subscriptions after they had received value in Bibles in the first instance; and thus the principle of Christian benevolence would be cherished, and more beneficent objects than one would be promoted at the same time.¹

‘III. That, not only to guarantee the utmost possible accuracy in printing the text of the Bible, but for other

¹ ‘I am satisfied that there are very few, even among the poor, who will not subscribe to our Congregational Societies for religious purposes, in the hope of getting Bibles for themselves in a way so obviously suited to their circumstances, yet saving, at the same time, that honourable spirit of independence among our Scottish population, which gratuitous distribution of any kind, justifiable only in cases of absolute penury, goes uniformly to destroy.’

important purposes, a Board should be formed, to consist of a competent number of ministers and laymen, and to be denominated "THE SCOTTISH BOARD FOR BIBLE CIRCULATION."

'IV. That this Board shall have the entire control of the funds to be raised ; that they shall hold the property of the stereotype plates, etc., to be purchased in the name of the constituents ; that they shall order everything as to the mode of printing, etc. ; and, with a view to the great object of securing cheap Bibles, and to prevent the possibility of imposition on the public, they shall fix the price to be charged alike to booksellers and all others, for each copy of the different editions of the Bible to be printed by their direction.

'If the plan above suggested should be adopted, Bibles might be sold for less than one-half of the present prices. No one will doubt that more Bibles would be bought if the price could be so greatly reduced ; while it would thus be comparatively easy to procure a small Bible for every child to peruse at home, and to take to the school or to the church. Even those in the humblest walks of life, though hitherto prevented by the present price, might enjoy the privilege of having a Family Bible in their houses. And were more Bibles bought, more would be read ; and there might thus be reason to hope that, to an extent hitherto unexampled in our country, "the word of the Lord would have free course and be glorified." What is here proposed is in accordance with the plan pursued by certain eminent publishers in our metropolis, of issuing from the press, beautifully printed, but at a remarkably reduced price, "The People's Edition" of literary productions, which they have thus placed within the reach of those by whom, on account of the expensive form in which they had hitherto been published, they could not be procured. Why not have editions for the poor of the people, as well as the rich, of that Book which alone can make all, whether rich or poor, young or old, "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus?"

‘But the results of the plan would not benefit our own countrymen merely ; it would enable Bible and Missionary Societies to buy Bibles at a much cheaper rate than hitherto, so as, at the same expense, to procure a much greater number of them, not only for home distribution among the poor, but also for many others in distant lands. It is on the principle here proposed that the American Bible Societies print their own Bibles. But for the monopoly, the same thing would long ago have been done among us. Now, then, that it is at length in our power, let us follow so good an example. At any rate, on the plan suggested, we may send almost an indefinite number of Bibles to our Foreign Mission stations in the West Indies, Canada, etc. etc. It was thought a great thing to send even a New Testament to every Christian negro on the day of his emancipation ; how much more to send the whole Bible to them all gratuitously, or for a trifle !

‘It should be remembered, too, that the Church is the grand depository of “the oracles of God” (Rom. iii. 2) ; and indeed each Christian Church should be a depository for the distribution of the Scriptures, its office-bearers taking care that all connected with it should be furnished with copies at the lowest price, or gratuitously in cases of extreme poverty. If on the principle now generally recognised, that every Christian Church should be a Missionary Church,—if Christian Churches are bound to send men to preach the gospel to all nations,—are they not equally bound to send to the heathen, at home and abroad, that Book, which, as it contains the only infallible instructions to the preachers, must ultimately be found the only charter of salvation to the people ?

‘Should the proposal now brought forward meet the approbation of my friends and brethren, I pledge myself that, while my health continues, and my circumstances permit, I shall take any trouble necessary, in the first instance, in maturing it, and in soliciting collections and subscriptions to have it carried into

execution. Even the very slight notices which have already appeared in some newspapers as to the general object in view, have led to a remarkable competition among stereotype-founders, printers, bookbinders, etc. in different parts of the country ; thus insuring the purchase of copies of the Scriptures in various forms by the proposed Board, at a price which, as Mr. Childs of Bungay, in a recent letter to me, expresses it, "will surprise the good people of England and Scotland too." The same gentleman adds : "Your movements are now loosening all the pegs of the English patent ; and then, when that shall be done away, Scotch Bibles will again be reduced." There is nothing in any part of my scheme which can be viewed in the light of a commercial speculation ; and indeed I have been careful to apprise those printers and publishers with whom I have been in correspondence, that the plan excludes all idea of profit to any one, except a reasonable remuneration for actual labour. On this understanding I have applied, and will further apply, for estimates of the expense of stereotype plates, and also of the expense of printing copies of the Bible from them ; while I will seek to procure whatever other information can be requisite to facilitate the grand object—that the word of God may be more widely circulated throughout our land, and wherever the English language is spoken throughout the world.'

It might be a mistake for Dr. Thomson to propose taking the Bible, 'as far as possible, out of the hands of *the trade*,' and to have it dissociated from all 'profits,' as if these were of the same character as the *spoils* of the patentees. The gospel itself is 'without money and without price ;' but in the printing, not less than in the preaching of it, the 'labourer is worthy of his hire.' The arrangement, that congregations in Scotland should act as 'Bible depositories' in providing copies of the Scriptures at cost price to all who wanted them, was not tried long, regularly, or generally enough, to show how it would

work in ordinary circumstances ; but, as a special expedient for an exceptional and critical period, it was both admirable and successful ; hence it was wisely adopted at the termination of the monopoly. Not a few, indeed, of our leading Bible-sellers have acted in accordance with the idea of extracting little or no pecuniary profit from low-priced editions, expecting large sales of these, not only to compensate for the fractional profits, but to lead to the sale both of high-priced Bibles that yield larger profits, and of books in general. The Doctor also found that his scheme, whilst for a time checking competition ‘among retailers,’ greatly encouraged it ‘among stereotype-founders, printers, papermakers, bookbinders, etc.’ ‘The printers,’ he adds, ‘by whom estimates were sent to me, have distinctly stated, most of them, that they would not have ventured to publish the Scriptures at all on the risk of a general sale ; and all of them, that they would never have thought of fixing the prices at so low a rate, but for the prospect of the large demand which my scheme holds out. The competition thus excited has been much greater than could otherwise have been possible.’ And the temporary check upon retailers was removed.

As soon as he introduced to the public his carefully organized ‘Scottish Board for Bible Circulation,’ and made known its constitution and aims, he was zealously supported by many of his Seceding brethren, who were ever prompt to encourage all such undertakings as—though intrinsically noble and wholly unsectarian—were likely to meet with gross apathy or keen opposition.¹

¹ The following note from Mr. Miall, of the *Nonconformist*, shows what judgment this eminently keen and candid English observer had formed of the public character and function of the Seceding ministers. He had ever regarded them as brave and high-minded champions of truth, charity, and freedom,—men among whom Dr. Thomson was a leader :—

‘January 20, 1842.

‘MY DEAR DOCTOR,—Allow me to return you my most hearty thanks

From all districts of the country, and from its principal towns, those ministers cordially approved of the plan and applauded its framer, urging him to prosecute it; nor did they find their congregations less eager for its success. Not a few eminent laymen of other Scottish Churches came forward to assist; and foremost and most enthusiastic among his early supporters was *James Douglas of Cavers*, whose intellectual

for the kind and handsome manner in which (as I learn from Mr. Neil) you took occasion at Edinburgh to speak of me and of the *Nonconformist*, and for having moved a vote of thanks to the editor of that paper. Amongst the most cheering encouragements which have followed my exertions in a great and noble cause, one of the most precious is the approval of those good and high-minded men who in Scotland stand pre-eminent amongst the enlightened advocates of freedom, both civil and religious,—the ministers of the Secession Church. First among the foremost, as far back as I can recollect, has always stood the name of Adam Thomson of Coldstream. I esteem it a high honour done to me, and a reward of my trifling services, to be recognised and thanked by yourself, and several of your brethren; and I beseech your prayers that I may go forward in this noble work, not only through honour, but, when the appointed time comes, through dishonour also.—I am, my dear Doctor, yours sincerely grateful,

‘EDWD. MIALL.

‘REV. A. THOMSON, D.D.’

Dr. Thomson, in his first introduction to the famous *Edward Irving*, who was then beginning to astonish London by his grand eloquence, was welcomed warmly as a friend on the ground that Mr. Irving had heard him frequently preach in a Secession pulpit in Annan. Irving passed into a strain of fervid eulogy on the sound and powerful preaching and the general ability and influence of Seceding ministers. By the way, the following note from Brougham—then plain Henry—describes his vivid admiration of Irving’s pulpit oratory; and we are not aware that Brougham’s opinion of Irving has ever before been expressed or indicated in public:—

‘HILL STREET, June 1823.

‘MY DEAR SIR,— . . . I never was more struck in my life than with the extraordinary powers of Mr. Irving’s preaching. He is indeed a very great and effectual workman. I am glad to observe that he regards the old and pure models,—not merely the ancient ones, but also the fine pulpit orators of this country in the seventeenth century, which are as a mine of precious ore.—My dear Sir, yours truly,

‘HY. BROUGHAM.’

achievements and works of Christian faith and love have given to the family name a greater lustre than was reflected from all the historical and legendary exploits of his ancestors. Mr. Douglas had long before honoured Dr. Thomson with a frank intimacy, and corresponded with him about pauperism and education, but more frequently about current schemes and movements of a benevolent or evangelical kind. He was at once interested in the project for cheap Bibles, and persuaded of its wisdom and practicability. He subscribed £65 to help in the purchase of stereotype plates, and gave large orders for copies of the different editions of the Bible that were to be printed. As soon as the 'Board' had become a 'fact,' his zeal—still more than his influential position in the country—led to his appointment as *President*, whilst upon Dr. Thomson devolved the onerous duties of *Secretary*.¹

Dr. Thomson brought the subject of the 'Board' before not

¹ Mr. Douglas, though a philosopher, and incessantly devoted to the promotion of home missionary work in Scotland, was yet, in his commanding mien and stalwart person, no degenerate representative of the powerful chieftain race that 'bearded kings;' he was every inch a 'doughty Douglas.' His stature was crowned with a massive and magnificent head. We vividly recollect a scene in a Seceding manse lobby, where several ministers had, on entering, their attention arrested by two hats that stood on the table. One of the hats was of extraordinary capacity, and within it the other could easily have been put. The wondering looks of the clerical group were fixed upon the remarkable hat and its diminutive neighbour; and those that tried the former on their own heads, had these and their faces eclipsed, the hat falling down to their shoulders. Who could be the owner? Was it Dr. Henderson of Galashiels? asked some who knew the Doctor's grandly capacious head. On entering a room, they found the minister along with Mr. Douglas of Cavers and Dr. Balmer of Berwick; and a glance sufficed to satisfy them as to whom the two hats belonged. Dr. Balmer, like Lord Jeffrey, had a very small—peculiarly shaped, yet admirably packed—head, and the whole expression of his face was singularly intellectual, benevolent, and saintly. All had met in the manse before going to take part in some 'Revival' services. Dr. Balmer was eager to draw Mr. Douglas into descriptions of the eminent men of the latter's acquaintance; but Mr. Douglas was wholly engrossed with the Revival movement, and would speak of nothing else.

only his own Presbytery, but the Edinburgh and Glasgow Presbyteries. The Border court expressed its entire approval, and recommended Dr. Thomson 'to apply to ministers, congregations, and benevolent individuals to aid him by collections, donations, and subscriptions, for the purchase of stereotype plates.' The Edinburgh and Glasgow Presbyteries, after receiving his oral explanations, cautiously appointed committees of inquiry, and these reported emphatically in favour of the Board. The two Presbyteries then gave it their deliberate and cordial sanction, and encouraged its projector to go on with its execution. Many other Presbyteries of the Secession hastened to follow the example; and money from congregations began to come in,—more slowly, indeed, and scantily than did the approbation and thanks, yet, on the whole, so freely and seasonably as to gladden Dr. Thomson, and to assure him of success. He addressed congregational meetings in various districts, exhibiting specimen sheets of the editions that were to be printed, and surprising his hearers by the low prices that were to be fixed. His features were lighted up with intense satisfaction as he displayed these first fruits of the victory over monopoly, and foresaw what a rich harvest of advantages it would soon yield to the country and the world. What marvels would be accomplished, he was wont to exclaim, when *stereotype* has been associated with *free* Bible printing! He often quoted the striking remark of a Glasgow printer, that when printing was invented, it was that God might then bring about the reformation of His Church; but that when *stereotype* printing was introduced, God meant to put the whole world in possession of the Bible. Small country congregations were more liberal than their wealthy town neighbours in supporting the Board. It was not unusual for one of the former to order, in succession, three or four large parcels of cheap Bibles, which were quickly disposed of in the locality; and each of these parcels contained several copies of the large

Family Bible, which was highly prized. The scheme was amply justified by its success ; and from Coldstream, which had been selected as the place where the Pope's Bull, excommunicating Henry VIII. for permitting the circulation of the Scriptures in the vernacular, should be published, free and unprecedentedly cheap Bibles began to issue forth over all Scotland, and to seek the most distant British colonies.¹

Almost immediately after the 'Scottish Board for Bible Circulation' had been formed, and while funds were being raised to purchase stereotype plates, etc. for certain editions of the Scripture that were urgently wanted at the smallest possible cost of production, the British and Foreign Bible Society was seized with a passion for engaging in cheap Bible circulation. The Directors did not seek to persuade or to alarm any of the English monopolists into a reduction of the prices charged to the Society ; nor did they demand for the Society that to it should be conceded the privilege which all the American Bible Societies enjoy, of printing its own Bibles. They had no objection to pay the exorbitant prices fixed by the patentees. But, whilst purchasing high-priced Bibles, could they not *sell* these marvellously cheap? Accordingly, on 1st February 1840, they began to sell at 1s. 6d. the Nonpareil Bible, which cost them 2s. 6d., and at 6d. the Brevier New Testament, which cost them 1s. 1d. ; and though this reduction was designed for the good of 'schools and the poor,' yet all who applied, though neither scholars nor poor, were made

¹ On the site of the Abbey, where the Pope's sentence against the English monarch was read, the printing and binding offices of the *Coldstream Free Bible Press* were erected ; and the number of Bibles printed *there* in the single year 1845 exceeded by 23,780 the whole number printed in 1832 in all England by the Queen's printers and the two privileged universities ! In 1845 no fewer than 178,200 Bibles were printed in Coldstream,—a strange association to be attached to that old Abbey site, and to be remembered along with the Papal Bull. Yet those Bibles, like the Pope's denunciation of Henry, dared not cross into England—the sacred territory of the monopolists.

welcome to it ; and the immense sale that took place showed what a stimulus circulation derives from cheapness. In three months 185,218 of those Bibles and Testaments were sold ; but when another three months had passed, the Directors found that, with their satisfaction over the wide dissemination of the Word of Life, there was blended no little anxiety about the loss which it had involved to the Society's funds,—a loss of £12,494, 10s. 2d. ; and they at once closed their experiment of reduction, 'not feeling themselves justified,' as they report, 'in making a further appropriation of the funds of the Society to that particular object.' The *time* chosen for the trial of this policy of selling Bibles at such a loss might excite surprise ; and observers regarded it as fitted, whether intended or not, to affect injuriously the first operations of the Scottish Board, and to render important help to the patentees. Just when the Board had announced that it was preparing to issue its unprecedentedly cheap editions, the Directors of the Bible Society, though purchasing Bibles at the exorbitantly high prices of the monopolists, agreed to let the public have those Bibles at the low prices which Dr. Thomson and the Scottish Board contemplated : hence, after the immense supply of Bibles cheapened in this equivocal manner, the market might have been spoiled for the cheap Scottish Bibles ; and in doing this, the large sum of £12,494 had, in the course of half a year, been taken from the income of the Bible Society, and put into the pockets of the monopolists. Why had not such a reduction been tried in a previous year ? and why was it reserved for this particular period, when it bore the aspect of opposing the free Bible printers of Scotland, and of devoting the Society's influence and a very large portion of its income to uphold the cause of the monopolists ? The strangely-timed measure, however, was in keeping with not a little in the Society's subsequent policy, which has exhibited both its agents and its resources for spreading Bibles, in apparent league

with what has been the mightiest and most unrelenting foe to Bible circulation. It is a highly significant fact that, so late as 1860, when a Parliamentary Committee considered the Bible patent for *England*, and reported decisively against its renewal, the one witness who defended the monopoly and urged its continuance, was 'the gentleman who represented the British and Foreign Bible Society;' and his testimony in 1860 was in strict harmony with all that the Directors had done since 1839, and could scarcely be less pleasant to these than to the monopolists, who ever found in the Bible Society their trusty patron. Dr. Thomson was exceedingly glad to hear of the unprecedentedly large dissemination of copies of the Scripture in consequence of their novel cheapness, and he might then have thought that there was no call for the *Scottish Board* and its operations; but, unfortunately, there was, to the funds of the disseminating Society, the attendant loss of nearly £13,000 in six months, and this made him more zealous to show that the Board could produce Bibles, to be sold quite as cheaply, without incurring any part of that tremendous loss. He asked—how many Bibles the *Scottish Board* could and would have produced for that immense sum which the monopoly had swallowed in half a year? and he invited the public to say—whether they wished to see the distribution of so many Bibles, or preferred to see the monopolists appropriating the equivalent money as enormous profits, exacted from 'customers' who were 'stewards' of the charitable contributions of the very classes of the population that have but little to give out of their hard-earned savings, and that expect this little to be expended with the strictest economy.

Even if the Bible Society had not at the end of six months discontinued its cheap sales, there would have been ample scope for the operations of the *Scottish Board*; and he hoped that the half-year's experience of cheap Bibles would not be

forgotten by the public, but would be made available, so as to help, instead of injuring the carrying out of the Board's designs. He had been urged to visit the principal towns in England, where he might expound his project for cheap Bible printing, and exhibit his specimen sheets and prices, with the view of enlisting the sympathy and support of the English public. He trusted, too, that his exposure of the evils of the English Bible patent (which had twenty years of life before it) would not be in vain, and that high-spirited Englishmen would not long submit to have their Bibles heavily taxed, after their neighbours across the Tweed were blessed with perfectly free and unprecedentedly cheap Bibles. In this English crusade he was joined by one who for several months laboured with prodigious energy and with commensurate effect ; but who, after assailing the English monopoly with the most copious, impassioned, and brilliant eloquence, as an intolerable impiety, iniquity, and curse, and after doing much by the irresistible facts, figures, and logic of his memorable speeches and letters to aid Dr. Thomson's cheap Bibles in constraining the English monopolists to bring down their Bibles to the low prices that were fixed in Scotland, yet came to the 'lame and impotent conclusion' of blessing that monopoly which he had so vigorously execrated, and of wishing 'long life and happiness to the English monopolists,' for having unwillingly adopted the compromise of *cheapening*, but not of *emancipating* the Bible,—a compromise which wholly satisfied the recently fervid assailant, though it left the 'hideous monopoly' untouched. We allude to Dr. John Campbell of London, a remarkable man, whose help Dr. Thomson so thoroughly appreciated, that he was greatly disappointed at its sudden and rather capricious withdrawal ; and instead of feeling jealous of the influence attending the Campbell agency, he wished that it had been at his side far earlier and had remained much longer, and had been throughout resolutely potent. He who had already borne the heat

and burden of the day, and who afterwards continued to labour during a still longer and more trying period, was wont to speak in the most ardently eulogistic terms of the friend who had been, for a single brief season, his most powerful associate. He would have greatly prized such an ally in the struggle against the *Scottish* monopoly ; but in this struggle Dr. Campbell took no part whatever, either by voice or by pen, and did nothing to prevent the patent's renewal to Blair and Bruce, or its transference to the Scottish universities, for another *forty* years. When subsequently Dr. Campbell entered the field, and fought with rare force and skill against the *English* monopoly and all its array of supporters, Dr. Thomson's admiration was unmixed with envy, and he rejoiced in the prospect that soon there would be formed in the south such a strong public opinion against the English monopoly as would overthrow it ; and even when, after a few months of vigorous hostility, his companion-in-arms suddenly concluded a peace with the monopolists, Dr. Thomson did not forget or undervalue Dr. Campbell's distinguished services during that short term, though he was intensely disappointed at the ignoble sequel. It is strange that those persons who have recently sought to commemorate Dr. Campbell's achievements on the free and cheap Bible question, refuse to be specific and minute, both about deeds and dates ; and by a 'flourish of trumpets' they mark time and its events. They are silent about the late stage of the movement at which he began to labour, nor do they indicate how soon afterwards he withdrew ; whilst as to what he did, they are vague and rhapsodical, and display not a little of very culpable ignorance. In the beginning of 1865, in the lifetime and also in the presence of Dr. Campbell, at a meeting presided over by Lord Shaftesbury, the Rev. Dr. Brown of Cheltenham, when presenting a testimonial of £3000 to Dr. Campbell, uttered the following words : 'Monopoly—that monster wrong—had even seized on God's Book ; and whilst

it could not be shut up, as in Catholic countries, from the public, still it was retained at the price which keeps tens of thousands from being its possessors. Men grumbled about this, but feared to strike. Some protested, but did no more. That most excellent of men, the late Dr. Thomson of Coldstream, laboured much and suffered more, *yet did not succeed*. *God gave the honour very largely to our friend Dr. Campbell, to smite this bloated enemy of God and men full in the forehead!* Now, if the speaker designed to allude to the *Scottish* monopoly, we should like to know how Dr. Thomson ‘failed’ in opposing it, when he was largely instrumental in *abolishing* it, and in introducing the cheapest Bibles that had ever been seen; and how Dr. Campbell *smote that monopoly full in the forehead*, when it had been dead and buried, long before he launched a stone or spoke a word against it! But if he alluded to the *English* monopoly, how could he say that Dr. Campbell, by what he spoke and wrote in the close of 1840 and the beginning of 1841, had ‘succeeded’ in smiting a monopoly which was in full life down to 1860, and which has not even yet been destroyed? for Dr. Campbell did not speak a word or move a little finger in 1860 against the patent’s renewal! When in 1841 the English monopolists craftily met the storm of indignation that was rising against them by reducing their Bibles to Dr. Thomson’s prices, Dr. Campbell invited the Nonconformist and religious public to let the monopolists alone, to forgive and be at peace with them after his striking example; and thus he shielded and saved, instead of *smiting*, the ‘bloated monster!’ The same Dr. Brown, preaching Dr. Campbell’s funeral sermon, thus refers to the Bible monopoly:—‘Adam Thomson, ever honoured name, with others, had declared that the Bible must be free, that the best book in the world must be the most accessible, and to this end they wrote and spoke. Parliament was appealed to; but the influence of monopoly had still power to

shut its ear. The justice and mercy of this cause awoke the attention and enlisted the pen of *John Campbell*, then known as the author of *Jethro*. In a series of letters, the most able, logical, analytical, eloquent, and convincing ever placed before the British public, he enlisted the sympathy and aroused the indignation of the holy and upright, especially of the Sunday-school teachers of the land, and called forth such a volume of public opinion as made Parliament inquire and British legislation silent. Very speedily, amid the applause of multitudes, *the monopoly was abolished!* All honour to Adam Thomson; all honour to John Campbell! Is not the foregoing narrative a strange mockery of the truth,—all the stranger as occurring in a solemn funeral sermon! The author of *Jethro* had no part in the abolition of the Scottish monopoly there referred to; and the greatly lauded ‘letters,’ which are represented as bringing about the overthrow of the monopoly, were written many months after the monopoly had fallen. Dr. Brown might with as much accuracy have described *Jethro* as assisting Moses to lead the Hebrews from their ‘house of bondage,’ and through the Red Sea! The same Dr. Brown has lately been associated with Dr. Ferguson in writing a voluminous memoir of Dr. Campbell; and, in the chapter devoted to the Bible monopoly, the statements are marked by similar looseness and blundering. Such ignorance is manifested about facts connected with the Scottish monopoly, that the establishment of the ‘Scottish Board for Bible Circulation,’ and the ‘printing of several beautiful editions of the Scriptures,’ are represented as *preceding and causing* the overthrow of the *Scottish monopoly in 1839*, whereas this removal of the patent preceded and caused the formation of the Board.—(P. 162 of the *Life and Labours of John Campbell, D.D.*)

Dr. Campbell’s biographers, indeed, honourably quote his own words, admitting that ‘but for Dr. Thomson, he would probably never have thought of the subject of the monopoly;’

and 'that but for Dr. Thomson, the author of *Jethro* had, in all probability, never either thought or written on the subject ; that his (Dr. C.'s) position is therefore a secondary one ; and to the Doctor (Thomson), his chief, he cheerfully accords whatever honour may have arisen from the enterprise.' In his letters and published writings, this admission is made in the most ungrudging style ; yet it is practically neutralized by the biographers declining to indicate *at what stage of the Bible movement, or in what year*, Dr. Campbell was led by Dr. Thomson to 'think and write on the subject,' and then leaving it to be inferred that Dr. Campbell took part in the struggle against the Scotch monopoly (from 1837 to July 1839) ; whereas this struggle was over, and the victory gained, and its fruits of cheap Bibles were being given to the country by the 'Scottish Board,' before Dr. Campbell spoke or wrote a word on the subject. Various phrases, stamped as 'abolition medals,' are bestowed on him, though the abolition was accomplished long before he took the field ; yet, say the biographers (and the suggestion, though gratuitous, is far from being either generous or just), 'it may be that Dr. Thomson himself was much too sensitive on the point of what was due to him !' *It might be*, for many good men have a wish to get credit for what they have actually done ; and this wish is more justifiable than a coveting or appropriation of the fame which belongs to the deeds of other men ; and far rather would we see a man 'sensitive' regarding all the peculiar honours to which he has a genuine claim, and feeling or showing annoyance whenever some of those honours are seized upon either by or for an individual who has not earned them, than we would see a man callous, or sweetly, smilingly tranquil when his partisans—after crowning his excellent talents with the noblest laurels to which transcendent genius in oratory and literature can aspire—proceed to load him with praises for other men's beneficent enterprises and actions,—praises which were won for work

done before he entered the field ! *It might be* that Dr. Thomson was 'too sensitive,' but it *was not* ; for whilst he scrupulously respected the honours due to others, he was far from self-asserting about his own ; and he was accustomed to see men, who had been only his occasional fellow-labourers, invested with the honours of such work as had been performed either before they joined or after they left him ; and this misappropriation never disturbed his equanimity, nor did he ask whether it was done in ignorance, or in wilful injustice. The insinuation of 'sensitiveness' against Dr. Thomson comes with an odd grace from those who, in their blundering narrative, detract largely from his individual share of services and achievements, and exaggerate that of Dr. Campbell, ascribing to the latter years of noble and successful labour, when he did not labour at all in the cause. We should have liked to see Dr. Campbell's biographers keenly 'sensitive' about his claims to distinction in this Bible monopoly matter, if they had also been scrupulously exact in telling when he began and when he ceased to labour, and what he did,—and if their vague and confused accounts had not impressed the belief that he bore a conspicuous part in campaigns which had closed victoriously, long before he took to arms !¹

There is now lying before us a large bundle of letters from Dr. Campbell to Dr. Thomson,—letters eminently characteristic ; and these will help us to give a true representation of the admirable services which at a particular crisis Dr. Campbell rendered to the cause of *cheap Bible circulation*.

When Dr. Campbell left a small charge in Kilmarnock for the pastorate of two large congregations in London, he was

¹ As a *harmless* specimen of *antedating* in Dr. Campbell's Memoir, we may mention that it represents Dr. Thomson as addressing himself to the Bible monopoly in 1834, instead of in 1837. But nothing is built upon this wrong date ; yet the many public documents regarding the Scottish Bible monopoly should have prevented the biographers from falling into such an inaccuracy.

not widely known as a preacher in Scotland, and he had no fame as an author (having published nothing). Yet the late Dr. John Brown (of Broughton Place Church, Edinburgh), after hearing him preach to a village audience in the open air, confessed his power to move all classes of hearers, and said that such preaching 'gave an idea of what Whitfield must have been.' He soon acquired in the metropolis celebrity and influence as a pulpit orator; and the protracted and harassing legal dispute which he was compelled to maintain with certain tyrannical trustees of his chapels, procured for him the sympathy of brethren both in the city and in the provinces. As soon, however, as he made use of the press, he became conscious of having in it a far larger scope for his energy than in the pulpit. He embodied the *lay* as well as the clerical elements, and had the *literary* ambition and qualifications not less fully developed than the *oratorical*; and for years he kept the functions of writing and preaching in close yet harmonious operation. His pen was engaged on subjects which were not less purely evangelical than those that engrossed his voice, though the former properly took a week-day latitude of view and liberty of exercise which he denied to the latter in its Sabbath utterances. On reading *The Comparative View of English and Scotch Dissenters*, he felt a strong desire to be personally acquainted with the author; and a warm friendship was soon formed between him and Dr. Thomson. The latter admired his London correspondent's vigorous and versatile intellect,—its ever energetic mood and sanguine temperament; and, on the appearance of *Jethro* and succeeding volumes, he felt no surprise, having taken a large measure of his friend's capacity, and indulged in high expectations of what it would achieve. Dr. Thomson, as soon as his estimate of Dr. Campbell's powers was confirmed by the publication of *Jethro*, became strongly solicitous that his friend's merits should receive the acknowledgment of a University

degree,—an honour to which few indeed were so well entitled. The correspondence between the London and the Coldstream ministers opens with a minute account by Mr. Campbell of the legal victory which he and his two congregations had just won over the dictatorial trustees, and also of the literary labours in which he was then engaged. He was reviewing books for the *Eclectic* and *Patriot*, and meant to introduce a new and much better kind of criticism than was current in religious journals. He had finished an elaborate notice of *The Comparative View*; and he promises that, when *The Consolation for Christian Mourners* (regarding the title of which he kindly makes copious suggestions) is published, he will promptly do it ‘justice.’ He mentions, as peculiar to all his literary judgments, that they were formed and expressed ‘as upon oath;’ and unquestionably he was an eminently sincere man, both meaning and believing all that he said; yet he had such partialities and prepossessions as often inclined him to bestow undue praise,—praise which was most conscientiously awarded by him, but which had not been *deserved* by the books, or the men he eulogized; and his critical career was marked by many instances of misplaced or exaggerated, though perfectly honest, laudation. To those who on any grounds might be called his enemies, he was never less than scrupulously and chivalrously *just*; but to his friends, certainly he was more than just, and his generosity unconsciously covered their faults, and ascribed to them imaginary merits that were eloquently admired.

In the walks of religious literature, he discovered ‘men of genius’ by the thousand, and hastened to herald their advent; and every morning his editorial table was loaded with ‘remarkable’ books, on each of which he poured out such hearty superlatives of eulogy as the noblest work of a generation might have called forth. This view of the Campbell supervision of current literature for more than twenty years could

easily be established ; yet it is quite consistent with the protestations in his letters, that he carried it on ‘as upon oath.’ His strictures, however, upon publications that advocated noxious error were as admirable for discrimination as for force, and measured out stern justice fairly.

In his letters to Coldstream, he frankly writes of himself and his literary labours :—

‘ I CHARLES SQUARE, Nov. 1, 1839.

‘ . . . The *Priest of Midian* [his work on *Jethro*] is said to sell very fast, and the old man seems to excite considerable notice here. He has been fathered upon several sires, though I fear, through some well-meaning but indiscreet friends, the relation is very generally charged upon your correspondent. However, I maintain a dogged silence, and do all I can to preserve secrecy ; and though some are confident, yet among most, I believe, it is doubtful. A notice, brief but kind, has just appeared in the *Evangelical*. I am not aware whether Dr. Morrison has the slightest idea who it is ; but I should rather suppose the contrary. He has struck the key-note well ; and I trust that my worthy friend Dr. Mathieson and myself will fare equally well among the dogs who have still to bark. I am far advanced with my work on *Maritime Discovery and Christian Missions, etc.* I expect to make this a very interesting vol. of about 600 pages octavo. It will be full of adventure “of strange men and uncouth manners.” I am taking great pains with it, and am, as usual with scribes, much enamoured of it. I can hardly conceive of a theme which admits of being rendered more captivating. . . . The point I should like your advice in determining is—*how shall this work appear ?* Supposing the possibility of obtaining by the end of March 1840—the period I expect to publish at—*what your benevolence towards me has led you to suggest* [obviously the diploma],—supposing this, I would then avow *Jethro*, and publish *Maritime Discovery* with my name ; but if the *aliquid* cannot be

procured at all, or not procured in time, I think of publishing anonymously by the author of *Jethro*. Such are my present notions, but I feel much inclined to put myself under your guidance upon the whole matter. I am satisfied of my safety in your hands. The diploma of Harris was got very quickly after the appearance of *Mammon*; from what college, through what means, I know not. It was from America, however, of course; and I have an impression that it came through the instance of some of his London brethren. You have now seen *Jethro*, and can judge how far it entitles its author to the consideration which you kindly suggested. That which would degrade the college by not sustaining the *diploma*, can never be an honour to me, for Solomon tells us that "honour is not seemly for a fool." If, therefore, on second thoughts, you deem an application indiscreet, I pray you let it drop for ever. In my last to you, I put it as a query—whether it might be prudent to postpone the application till the appearance of *Discovery and Missions*, but, on further consideration, I doubt if much would be gained. This work will be a very simple affair, compared with *Jethro*; it will be a very different species of composition, but by no means an augmented test of information, culture, or ability. . . .—Your faithful friend,

‘JOHN CAMPBELL.’

On the following day (Nov. 2, 1839) he again writes at length; and after mentioning that the ‘final adjudication of the fearful contest which he and his flocks’ had so long sustained, was expected on the 25th of the same month, he writes:—

‘If all this hold true, the close of this year will be a very important era in my personal history, and in that of my flocks and chapels. Few ministers have suffered more than I have done in defence of truth and principle. I begin to think, however, with Dr. Fletcher, my attached and faithful

friend amid all my trials, that, in the matter of *Jethro*, it hath pleased God "to show me a token for good, that they which hate me may see it and be ashamed; because the Lord hath holpen me and comforted me." How the work may fare in the periodicals at large, I know not; but all or most of our leading men here are loud in its praises. This I have ascertained with indubitable certainty, and without any solicitation on my part. If the leaders approve, the multitude will shout for a few weeks, asking no questions. It is not impossible that it may be lauded for a little far above its merits. There is little moderation in England; we must have gods many as well as lords many, though we are often changing them. Never, perhaps, in the history of literature, was there such an example of this as in the case of *Mammon*, to celebrate the praises of which became for a time a fashion and a passion. Posterity will assuredly laugh at us; indeed, we are begun to laugh at ourselves. Never were the praise and the merit of an undertaking more disproportioned to each other: *Mammon*, considered absolutely, is unquestionably a flimsy affair, and, compared with its elder brother, *The Great Teacher*, it is but a showily-dressed slender female. If it please God to give my book extensive acceptance, it becomes a great question how to make that acceptance bear upon the spiritual good of my chapels, and the rapid renovation of causes which, though still exceedingly powerful, have yet sustained a shock, and been much injured. Now, a legal decision in our favour will, of itself, be a matter of the utmost moment. Mankind determine the merits by the issue of a struggle; they desire, likewise, to be upon the winning side; and I count with confidence upon a prodigious reaction on my behalf. Many who have affected to consider me a madman will proclaim me a hero! Say, then, that the matter proceeds thus: 1st, The legal decision in our favour; 2d, The authorship of *Jethro* is generally rumoured; 3d, *A Literary Incorpora-*

tion stamps it with a seal of approbation; 4th, Maritime Discovery, etc., immediately succeeds, bearing on its forehead that seal, and the public avowal of *Jethro*. I think all this would go a great way to place me in a favourable position before the public, and completely clear away those clouds which malignant calumny may for a moment have gathered around me. Such, my dear friend, is the castle which my trembling heart is now seeking to build. I must leave it to that God, whose honour in all this I would fain promote, to determine it as to Him shall seem good. If it can be realized, I am well convinced that it would be of immense importance to my pastoral and public character, and exceedingly contribute as an instrument to metropolitan usefulness. It is very important that, if possible, anything to be attempted *should proceed without delay*. I leave it, however, entirely with you. No man on earth knows a word of what you contemplate. *It is between ourselves and that Lord* whose honour, I hope, we seek as our great ultimate object. Whatever expense may be incurred, of course, I will cheerfully bear it. It may be best to send the whole of my productions, great and small, that some notion may be formed of the man whom you seek to honour. I shall therefore order Snow to transmit the whole, except my *Addresses*, which is a local matter. . . .—Your faithful and obliged friend,

‘JOHN CAMPBELL.’

The first idea was to apply to *America* for the honour; but Dr. Thomson soon found that there was encouragement in a much nearer and not less important quarter—*The University of St. Andrews*—where Mr. Campbell had studied for his first two sessions.¹

¹ The following letter from the Rev. Mr. (now Dr.) Taylor to Dr. Thomson gives interesting information of what was going on shortly before the degree of D.D. was conferred on Mr. Campbell :—

‘ST. ANDREWS, Sept. 29, 1840.

. . . ‘I mentioned to Dr. Gillespie (Sir D. Brewster is at present in Glas-

St. Andrews Professors moved on with dignified slowness; and it was not until July [January?] 1841 that the degree was conferred, as the following communication from Professor Gillespie to Dr. Thomson shows:—

‘ST. ANDREWS, *July* [*Jan.?*] 21, 1841.

‘DEAR SIR,—I am happy to inform you that Mr. John Campbell had the degree of D.D. unanimously conferred on him yesterday by the Senatus Academicus of St. Andrews, and that your letter, with a most valuable attestation from London by Henderson, Smith, and Burder, removed all hesitation from the minds of some who were irresolute. . . . I rejoice exceed-

gow) the receipt of your letter. In a note he says: “I hasten to assure you and Dr. Thomson that I will assuredly bring the matter under the notice of the University, and will do everything in my power to obtain the degree so well merited.” I saw him to-day, and he mentioned the plan he meant to follow. In the old Tory times it was customary for the person proposing a candidate for a degree to wait on the Professors privately to ask their votes. This custom was first broken through by Sir D. Brewster in the case of Dr. Balmer; and Gillespie intends to follow his example, and to lay Mr. Campbell’s works before the Senatus, and to direct their attention to their excellences, and on that ground to propose that the degree be conferred as an honour which Mr. C. is entitled to expect from their hands. . . . As two of the Divinity Professors are liberal, and non-residents, it will not be prudent to bring the matter forward in their absence. I do not think it as at all probable that the Tory Professors, as a body, will oppose the conferring of the degree; but it is just as well not to put anything in their power. But for the neglect of this caution, a degree would have been conferred by this University on Dr. Dick. The proposal was lost by the absence of Dr. Briggs. . . . Dr. G. wishes to know what year it was that Mr. C. entered the college, and how long it is since *he first began to preach*. Dr. Haldane has some theory of his own, that a minister ought to have preached twenty years before receiving a degree. . . . Accept of my thanks for the pamphlet you sent. I had not seen the articles in the *Patriot*. I am astonished how you are able to go through the arduous labours you have undertaken. It must require a frame of iron. There are very few men in our Church who could undergo even the bodily fatigue; and I question much if there be one whose public spirit would lead him to venture on such an undertaking. If your labours had been confined to this alone, you would have laid, not merely the Secession Church, but the country at large, under an obligation which can never be too highly appreciated.—I remain, dear sir, yours most sincerely,

‘JAMES TAYLOR.’

ingly that I have been honoured as an instrument of breaking up that contracted and unchristian system under which such academic honours have hitherto been but too frequently dispensed; and I am well assured that Dr. Campbell will reflect great credit upon the University with which he is now more closely than ever connected. Wishing you all success in your splendid and useful course for procuring cheap Bibles,—My dear sir, yours truly,

‘THOMAS GILLESPIE.

‘THE REV. DR. THOMSON.’

On 18th January 1840 Mr. Campbell asks: ‘What are you doing? I saw from a paper that you were still awake on the great subject. I must desire success for the glorious project of stereotyping the word of God. I heartily concur in the spirit and terms of your motion. Much may still be done in the employment of the press for the cause of God. The world is decidedly in advance of the Church upon the subject. The system of *cheap publication* is being carried to a vast extent in London, and many of our most *exceptionable* works are now brought within the reach of our very apprentices and servant girls. . . . I hope you got the *Congregational Magazine*, and were satisfied with the measure of ‘justice’ dealt out to you. I feel convinced that there is nothing more miserably conducted among us than criticism. There is so much stupidity at one time, so much ignorance at another, so much partiality here, so much prejudice there, such a want either of sense or of principle. . . . About 1600 copies of *Jethro* are sold in about four months. This is well for a book which was clearly not for the *multitude*.’ [Then, and in some subsequent letters he tells what the *Reviews* had said, and who were the individual critics, and transcribes extracts from them.] On 6th March 1840 he writes: ‘Six years in Chancery, and two in arbitrators’ chambers! Hei mihi! In addition to this, I have been mightily pushed by the printers. . . . I am quite full of your

Bible project; it is grand; it is, beyond expression, praiseworthy. I will afterwards give you my thoughts.' [Then he goes on to notice *The Consolation for Mourners*.] On 28th of the same month, after paragraphs about the new 'deed' of his chapels, he says: 'To come to better subjects—the Bible project—I exceedingly admire it. I am really unable to make one correction on the paper. I could indeed fill many a page with comments expressive of my admiration. The middle paragraph of page 3 is very fine; it comprises a body of principles which might be expanded into a volume. I am glad to see the minute of Presbytery, and doubt not that the general patronage will be such as is merited by the object. . . .' On July 1, 1840: 'I need hardly say that such is my love of country, and such my feelings towards my first college, that scarcely anything could gratify my honest, patriotic, and even religious feelings more, than a tribute to my industry and desire to glorify God by my attempts to benefit mankind, from the Senatus of St. Andrews. . . . With respect to my books, I think it will be advisable to let them have all. I am perhaps silly, and displaying pride under the guise of principle, but such are my feelings that I cannot send them. I must leave it with my zealous friend to order them of Snow on his own account. Of course I will take care that disinterested friendship shall never be a loser by me. I must leave the matter in the hands of my faithful and discreet friend, and turn to a subject far more interesting—to yourself and your affairs. I admire the Bible scheme beyond expression. I consider it not only practicable, but easily so. I consider it at this moment by far the noblest undertaking in the empire, and its author—of all men living—the most honoured and the most enviable. Let this suffice for *general* opinion. My more particular views you shall have in another form. *I think I shall best aid you by a column in the Patriot* upon the subject, and for that you may look within the compass of a month

from this date. I will there break a lance with some at least of your *feeble* antagonists ; the strong men I must leave to your stronger self.' Thus, in July 1840, a year *after* the abolition of the Scottish monopoly, and months after the Scottish Board was before the public, Dr. Campbell was simply a *spectator* of the great struggle ; but he promises that in a month he will enter the field at the head of 'a column' in the *Patriot*. He nobly redeemed his pledge ; and for the months during which he wrote in the *Patriot* against the English monopoly and in favour of free and cheap Bibles, he rendered such 'aid' as Dr. Thomson had never received from any or all of his associates. On 29th July (1840) he writes : '. . . I approach this mighty theme with great solemnity ; I view it as a matter of paramount importance to the cause of God and the salvation of Great Britain's teeming millions. I set about it as *no act of friendship*, but as a *transcendent duty* to our exalted Lord. I cannot rest satisfied with simply though emphatically expressing my views ; I am intensely anxious to forward the glorious object under these impressions. I feel the want of adequate knowledge to enable me to wield a powerful pen in behalf of your splendid project. Do then, my venerated friend, favour me with a statement of the chief *objections* which have been made against you,—of what is essential to your success,—of the extent to which England ought to come forward, and also of the manner. State also whatever else may forward the object. Tell me next at what *time* you would like it to appear : this, I think, ought just to precede your journey to England. . . . The St. Andrews affair is very extraordinary ; it looks very like the finger of God. I wait with not a little interest the result of such unexpected movements. . . . I am not astonished that the Professor was so enamoured of the "*Comparative View*," for I was hardly ever more charmed with anything. I deemed it one of the most sagacious and thoroughly practical works that ever came to my hand, and it excited in me a very strong regard

for the author, and an ardent wish to see the bold, keen observer, and truly philosophical speculator. If your anticipations shall be realized, I little thought of the extent to which, at a distant future, that book was destined to affect my own position among men of letters and in the Church of God. At any rate, I am pleased with the providential aspect which the thing bears ; and if your object be realized, I shall receive the honour as from Him, who is the fountain of all good, and look upon you as the important instrument employed by Him for the accomplishment of his gracious purposes. Health, happiness, the Church's love, and Heaven's blessing on your beloved son ! My very respectful compliments to him. Truly you are a busy man. May strength and health continue to you, and your usefulness be increased a hundredfold ! Amen and amen. —So prays your affectionate brother ;' etc.

On the 6th of August (1840) he was engaged in the composition of his first article on the subject : ' My dear Friend,—yours of the 4th came in while I was in the very act of penning a sentence of thunder and lightning against our English monopolists. I devoted all yesterday to the article, and have been all this day upon the same. I now feel master of the *general question*, and I intended to send you a line to-day to say that my whole difficulty was to give the question sufficient bearing upon the *interests* of Englishmen—to make it fasten upon their SELFISHNESS. From your two last letters, I see that this matter had not escaped your long head ; you seem to have foreseen what I did not fully perceive till I began to meditate preparatory to composition. You say you "*understand they could not prevent*, etc." Of course, I must adopt phraseology less loose and more positive in my lucubration, and I must therefore be off to search for the *Act* which constitutes the *cormorants* (monopolists). I am half done with my article. I have written about a column, and, acting upon your wise suggestion, I shall hurry for the intelligence you promise before

I go to press. I think I can make out a very strong case in your behalf, notwithstanding your being shut out from the English market. If anything occurs to you, let me have it without a moment's delay. I have received the sheets of *Consolation*; it will be a beautiful volume, and even "better than it's bonny." . . . How I should like to visit St. Andrews with you! On the 11th August (1840) he writes: 'The first broadside is fired! What I have done is only introductory; there is more thunder yet to come along with the pleadings in behalf of your mechanism. . . . I am going on with the *shotting* of the guns for next week. Whatever you have further to say, let me have it without delay. Do give me a "full, minute, general, and particular account" of all that took place at the constitution of the Board, and any hint which you think will be of any use in my next lucubration.' On August 22 (1840) he writes: 'The ship is launched, and the deck must be cleared. In other words, I have just finished the fourth and last article in behalf of your project. I every moment expect a proof of the third, the "copy" of which I sent to Bolt Court yesterday morning, and will appear on Monday. If the *Pilot* [*Scottish Pilot* of Edinburgh] be kind, he will republish them; as, coming from the London press, they would have more weight in Scotland than *his own* lucubrations. [The Scottish editor perhaps thought otherwise.] I have gone through the evidence of 1831 and 1837, and, in a word, given your object all the aid that, in present circumstances, I could find time to impart. What a business is the evidence! I would not have acted the part of Spottiswoode and his fellow-patentee for all their fortune. It was most disgusting. I was annoyed at the contemptible figure cut by Adam Black. James Duncan did not shine. Lee I liked much on the whole. Childs was matchless. How strikingly he exemplifies the force of practical knowledge! Your appearance—especially on the second day—was copious and noble;

at once worthy of the subject and the man. I can see, from their questions, that the Committee appreciated the evidence of Childs and yourself.' On September 7 (1840) Mr. Campbell, in a very lengthy communication to Dr. Thomson, advises the latter to advocate the claims of the 'Scottish Board' thoroughly in Scotland before proceeding to hold public meetings in England; and gives minute advice as to the steps that should be taken in both countries. 'It will not do,' he sums up, 'to *begin* in England; and when you do come hither, it will not do to *commence* in the provinces—but in London. Nay, I would say, "Place no dependence on the Saxons at all." The patent shuts us out from direct benefit from the blessings of your glorious plan; and John Bull is a selfish gentleman,—he will give you his money if you can give him the *quid pro quo*, but otherwise he is hard-handed. If you could get him patiently to view the scheme, he would lend a helping hand, but he is not endowed with patience of investigation. Everything must be made "plain as a pike-staff." I must not be hard upon the old man, however, for he often gives nobly to distant objects, from which he can derive no benefit on this side of eternity. If Scotland do its duty, England will not be wanting. I have surveyed the subject on all sides. I see that you have a herculean task before you, till you get the machine fairly into motion. May God ever help you! Accept these general notions, my dear friend, as a further token of the profound regard in which you are held by John Campbell.'

Dr. Thomson did go to the south, however, in the beginning of October (1840), and addressed large public meetings in Lancashire, where Mr. Campbell also was present, and gave invaluable assistance. The latter's speech at Liverpool, discussing the whole question of a Bible monopoly, denouncing the English patent, and supporting the Scottish Board for Bible Circulation, was masterly, brilliant, and conclusive. Afterwards, in private, Dr. Thomson never alluded to the remark-

able speeches which he had heard in the course of his long life, without making a special and enthusiastic mention of this noble oration by Campbell. We go on to quote from the correspondence. On December 2 (1840), Mr. Campbell says : 'I fire another gun to-morrow in the *Patriot*. I am happy my reply to Spottiswoode pleases you. I see you over-estimate it, as you have done all my services. I had your reply to "Experience" (he has some more experience now !) brought me in a proof-slip. I need only say that the *Patriot* folks think you have answered him to the full as effectively as I have Spottiswoode : nor is this their view alone, but that of all with whom I have met. "Experience" has done the cause immense service ; but for him, you could never have published the important points contained in your reply. I have never in my life seen anything more complete than it is. . . .

'The *Christian Observer* is full of fury against us—*me* particularly. They say, Dan O'Connell is a mere *whipster* compared with me ! There's for you ! You should not lose an hour in getting to England. This remark was made to me to-day by the *Patriot* folks.' On December 5th, he again writes : 'I am glad that you are about to come south. I like your route, but fear that you will not have much more than *one-third* of the time which you would require to do your work effectually. It will suffice, however, to break the soil. Do bring with you an abundance of *specimens*. These are your strong "reasons." I doubt your getting collections in almost any place in the *first* instance ; but you will get something even by a voyage of discovery. I doubt not the Bible Society and Spottiswoode are moving heaven and earth to obstruct your way. However, I am confident of your success to a very great extent. The monopolists cannot stand before you. You will either destroy their patents or diminish their value. I expect large success for you everywhere, except in London. Here are the agents of the universities, Spottiswoode and his "gang,"

the committee of the Bible Society, the Tory press, and a mob of shallow, rash, busy, bigoted religionists, no small part of whose piety consists in prejudice against all that is new, and for all that is old, especially for the Church of England, and the infallibility of the B. and F. Society. I think my *Comparative View of the Prices* will be a dose that will prepare the stomach of men for your wholesome food. I am exceedingly glad that I was led to it. It is a "tickler." What will Sp. say to it? Thanks for the St. Andrews letter. I was greatly amused with it. I am also pleased with the quiet zeal with which you go about the interests of your friends. You are really a faithful, as well as prudent friend. I could not but feel amid contrasts. The day in which the *Christian Observer* denounced me as an Indian savage, a "brother of the tomahawk," that same day I was admitted to the fellowship of philosophers and men of letters. I think your surmises were well founded; but I had counted the cost, and I would not have softened one word in the reply to Spottiswoode for all the honours of all the universities in the universe! I almost wonder it did not miscarry; but we must not shout till we get out of the wood. To receive a degree from St. Andrews would certainly be a gratification; still, if the forfeit be the price of conscience, I can die in peace without it.'

We may here explain that the effect produced by the appearance of the cheap Scotch Bibles, by the publication of Mr. Campbell's rousing and powerful letters in the *Patriot*, and by the influential and enthusiastic meetings in Lancashire, began to show itself in the alarm of the English patentees; and in November 1840, a letter appeared in the *Times*,¹ from Mr. Andrew Spottiswoode, who bestirred himself—neither very scrupulously nor at all successfully—in behalf of his endangered

¹ In the year when Dr. Thomson was Moderator of the United Secession Synod, his Voluntary writings and speeches attracted the notice of the *Times*, and drew down upon him a piece of invective which, but for want of room, we should have here reprinted as a *curiosity* for the *kind* of its personali-

'craft.' The *title* of the letter was so striking that it might have dispensed with the large capitals in which it burst upon the readers of the 'leading journal;' it was 'ALLEGED Bible Monopoly,' as if the Bible patent, and its peculiarly stringent provisions, were wholly imaginary, and as if the many fearful evils which it had entailed on the public, and the splendid fortune which it had accumulated for, as well as the large annual income which it was yielding to, Mr. Spottiswoode himself, only existed in the heated fancy of certain 'agitators!' If any English printers had presumed to issue an edition of the Bible, they would soon have found, to their cost, that the Bible monopoly was a legal *reality*, with nothing either doubtful or obsolete, and that it could defend itself with very substantial penalties; and Mr. Spottiswoode himself would have shown, in a law court, that he was the holder of something not quite so harmless as a merely '*alleged* monopoly,' and that his 'privilege' was as strict as his language about it was loose. The letter was in keeping with the clumsily disguised, the whitewashing title. With a poor affectation of dignified contempt, it abused the advocates of free and cheap Bibles as practising 'deception' and circulating 'fallacies,' 'barefaced assertions,' 'deliberate misrepresentations,' and 'extreme absurdities;' and it justified the monopoly as a blessed privilege, not for 'Andrew Spottiswoode' and his partners, but for the entire public! Boldly, in the face of the Parliamentary Committee's Report, and of the Government decision about the Scotch patent, he made the unqualified declaration that 'it has never yet been shown to those who would take the trouble to investigate, that equal efficiency or cheapness would be obtained' *without* the monopoly!

ties. The writer hinted at his thorough knowledge of the members of the *Coldstream session*, and his sarcasm lay in alluding to their Christian names in *Scotch*! There were no 'Praise-God-Barebones,' no 'Habakkuk,' or 'Obadiah;' but 'Wully,' 'Sandy,' 'Bobby,' 'Bauldy,' etc. Was not the hand of the redoubtable *Peter Borthwick, Esq.*, in it?

To this letter from Mr. Andrew Spottiswoode, who was at once a champion and a holder of the monopoly, the most conclusive replies were immediately furnished by Dr. Thomson and Mr. Campbell. The patentee, if his *privilege* had depended upon this conflict between him and Thomson and Campbell, would have been summarily thrust aside as an obstacle in the way of Bible circulation. The readers of Mr. Campbell's letters of reply in the *Patriot* cannot have forgotten the Campbell war-cry of '*I charge Mr. Spottiswoode with misrepresentation,*' which preceded a long series of irresistible and overwhelming assaults upon the monopolist's facts, figures, and arguments. The patentee's case was 'smashed' in a way the most unanswerable; and all the proud reasons which Mr. Spottiswoode had adduced were broken and scattered into dust along the triumphal course of Mr. Campbell's rejoinders. Mr. Spottiswoode himself, however, furnished a still more complete and memorable demolition to his own case; and, in the short space of *three months*, he refuted his former statement, that no cheaper Bibles could be produced, by himself actually producing them *more than twice as cheap!* The prices total of all his editions, as the list stood in November 1840, amounted to £20, 1s. 6d.; but the prices of the very same list of editions, as advertised in February 1841, had fallen to £9, 14s. 5d.! Could self-contradiction and self-refutation have gone further? And was not this notable reduction of the English monopolist's prices a conclusive proof of the effect produced by the cheap Scotch Bibles, the *Patriot* letters, and the great public meetings?

We resume our quotations from Mr. Campbell's letters to Dr. Thomson.

'March 1, 1841.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—I received your last favour, with Mr. Taylor's note, in due course. I received, since, a half dozen copies of the *Scotsman*, in which I saw a notice of a certain event. I think I see the hand of an able but too partial friend

in the notice. . . . The thing is exciting a great deal of interest in the city among the Dissenting circles. Congratulations, to oppression, pour in upon me. The cry, "He deserves it well," seems universal. It meets me at every turn. Men have conspired to give your friend the character of a hard-working man. Would it were so! I really must leave the theme. I cannot write upon it. If I could, there is one gentleman of whose wisdom, prudence, and penetration I could say much. Perhaps my courage may by-and-by suffice for a dissertation upon his claims on my grateful esteem. Let me off in pursuit of the enemy! I am, and shall be, at home there. I have assailed the men of Oxford, heart and soul, once more in this night's *Patriot*. I do not think I have been too severe, for really I look upon them with much suspicion. Our friend and fellow-countryman, *Andrew*, is, after all, the best of the lot. I have done him justice. I doubt not my letter will produce a great sensation. I am glad I wrote the smooth letters I did respecting Oxford. They will edge with fivefold keenness the severe strictures of this day. I expect to write you at great length in the beginning of next week. I have said *you*, but perhaps it will be Mrs. Thomson. I was greatly delighted with the *Kelso Chronicle*. I love all who do justice to my friend. I rejoice that your people have acted as they have done. By the way, I leave the management of a certain document wholly to a certain Doctor and Mr. Taylor, only stating that whatever expense may be incurred will be immediately reimbursed to you. The book for Dr. Gillespie will be carefully attended to.—Your affectionate friend and brother,

‘JOHN CAMPBELL.’

On 13th March (1841) he writes :—

‘MY DEAR AND HONOURED FRIEND,—Where are you? What are you about? Are your pens done? Is the fountain of ink dried up? Or has the supply of paper failed? I am longing

to hear how you are proceeding respecting the Board. How do you stand with Arnold? [Mr. C. gives the city rumours about the actual or impending failure of some printers, and is concerned lest his friend should be involved in loss.] It will be grievous indeed, if, after enriching the world, you should ruin yourself. . . . The work advances throughout the country. Resolutions are reaching me almost daily, expressive of thanks to the *famous Scottish captain* and his "master of the horse." How unlike the "resolutions" of the dupe-auxiliary in Southwark to those of Liverpool! Not a word about monopoly or cheap Bibles! They comprise nothing but an empty string of vehement resolutions of adhesion to the B. and F. B. Society. The speakers absolutely raged against me. I was "the staple of their argument." Mr. M. stood up to defend me, and they would not hear him. The matter shall not end there. I will make them smart for these resolutions, though, perhaps, I shall adopt another signature. I have discovered things in regard to the men of Earl Street which disgrace them and disgust me. I really believe they will force on a hostile movement against them. They seem grieved that the monopolists have reduced their Bibles. They wished to keep the nation dependent on them, and their hold is gone. I am determined to work out this point. They have both wronged and roused me. I have reprinted my last letter, and added to it another which will appear in Monday's *Patriot*. The new letter will trouble them more than a little. Very kind regards to Mrs. T., whom I thought to have addressed this time but for the matters which called "to arms," and required me to communicate with my *General*.'

In the same month, however, without previously 'communicating with his General' about the strange step he meant to take, he withdrew suddenly and finally from the battle against the English monopoly, though he had only fought for six

months, and though the monopoly had nearly twenty years of mischievous life before it! It was a trifle that he should have given no intimation to the friend whom he had styled his 'Captain' and 'General' in the Bible movement, of any design to throw up his commission; but it was astounding that the dashing 'Master of the Horse,' who had so often of late made both whirlwind-charges upon the enemy, and crushing attacks even on the committee and chief patrons of the British and Foreign Bible Society for their professed neutrality, should unexpectedly lay down his arms and conclude a peace with the monopolists, not because these had resigned their patent, but because, partly from necessity and partly from selfish cunning, they had reduced their prices of various popular editions down to the free-trade level which, only a few weeks before, they had, as upon oath, averred to be impracticably cheap by a full half of the prices.¹ Nay, he had not only ceased to assail them, he began to *bless* them; and that this singular benediction might not be single, but might be so reinforced by the AMEN of all the Sabbath-school children in the country as to be of incalculable 'avail,' he called upon 'the children of England, with gladsome voice, to cry "Long life and good health to the imperial monopolist! Prosperity to Mr. Spottiswoode!"' He told them that Mr. Spottiswoode was 'the best of the three monopolists,' and with comical, yet unconscious inconclusiveness, added, 'None of them, I grant, are good; none of them have the slightest claim to the gratitude,

¹ The 'elegantly got up' editions of the Bible were *not* reduced; hence the unfair gains on Bibles for the *rich* were still exacted. This was, indeed, a less crying evil; yet, even here, the gross injustice of the monopoly was intolerable; for, why should the many printers in England be wholly *excluded* from competing with Spottiswoode and the universities in producing Bibles for the rich? 'The patentee's right,' Mr. Campbell had but recently said, 'was a *wrong* to all the printers of England.' The patent to the Spottiswoode firm was so comprehensive, that it gave them the sole right of printing the Bible *in any language*, even in the original Hebrew and Greek, and with, as well as without, lengthy notes.

or even to the respect of England! They ought to be glad to escape her vengeance on the ground of past delinquencies! But there they are,—wearing the worse than equivocal character which Mr. Campbell gave to each and all; and there, too, was Mr. Campbell himself, in the rather equivocal function of washing and whitewashing the ‘Ethiopians,’ and of ‘unspotting’ the ‘leopards,’ and of hailing as a blessing the monopoly which he had sternly denounced as a national curse! What a change! He who had for six months been the uncompromising foe of the English monopoly, and the zealous advocate of free and cheap Bibles; he who had exposed the monopoly as ‘a hideous object under every aspect, however disguised or decorated, and as the perfection of the abomination that maketh desolate;’ he who had affirmed that ‘men, angels, earth, and heaven—the voice of the universe as with the voice of ten thousand thunders—proclaim the impossibility of vindicating the monopoly;’ he who, in a peroration, of which the solemnity was not destroyed, though it was considerably disturbed, by its being a servile imitation of the close of Lord Brougham’s famous Reform speech, had thus adjured the leading orders in the State: ‘I plead with England’s nobles, with her patriots, and with her Parliament; and ye legislators, ye rulers of my country, and thou, Sovereign Princess, august object of a nation’s most profound esteem—I ask, I beg, I implore of you, the emancipation of the printing-press;’ he who had ‘shotted’ and ‘fired’ so many ‘guns in the *Patriot*’ against that English monopoly, its holders and its various abettors,—now suddenly withdrew from the conflict, and sounded the signal of retreat to his ‘two millions’ of Sabbath school recruits, if he did not also attempt to ‘spike’ the guns that were in the care of a far earlier and steadier champion of free and cheap Bible circulation! He, indeed, returned to the battle-field, but it was to heal the wounds which he had inflicted upon the monopoly, and to wish, in chorus with the ‘gladsome

voice of the children of England, long life, good health, and prosperity to the monopolists ;' to discourage, if not to smite, his former associates, by assuring them that, according to his infallible knowledge, they had not a single chance of triumphing over, or even of standing against, the monopoly (though a few weeks ago his language was, 'Throw but a stone, the giant dies'), and to vapour about his *magnanimity*, and 'what not,' in leaving the battle, whilst he, as offensively as gratuitously, insinuated that all who continued the fight which he had deserted, were influenced by merely selfish motives. He intimated, however, that, when 1860 dawned, the English monopoly would resume its old hideousness, and that then Christian philanthropists must take up their weapons to make an end of it. Looking forward to that year (when the English patent would either expire or be renewed), he thus solemnly spoke of himself: 'Long before that period, the hand which wrote these letters [in the *Patriot*] may have mouldered into dust; but should Providence have otherwise ordained, still that hand will be one of feebleness and trembling. The author of *Jethro*, bordering on threescore years and ten, will then no longer be permitted to enjoy the privilege either of sounding the trumpet or of ordering the battle. In a prospective alternative, therefore, of decrepitude or the grave, it greatly consoles me to commit to the SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHERS of England this sacred cause—of finally abolishing the English monopoly.' He summons them to prepare and muster all their forces for 1-8-6-0, and to resolve, and then to enforce their resolution, 'that the patent should not, shall not, be renewed!' 'Will you,' he asks the teachers, 'adopt this resolution? You will; you do! Remember, then, your vow! I take earth and heaven to witness! See that you fulfil your solemn obligation!' When 1860 came round, Dr. Campbell was, according to his frequent statements then, and years afterwards, as sound and vigorous, both physically and mentally, and certainly as capable

of 'blowing a trumpet,' as in the preceding generation. He was in full harness as a journalist; and his biographers have described him at this period in the following paragraph, which perhaps indicates *his* general vigour more than *their* discrimination or taste: 'Daily might his upright, portly figure be seen walking up Fleet Street—the observed of many observers—with a bundle of books or papers in the left hand, tightly held, and his umbrella or stick in the right, *vigorously thrashing the pavement, with a look defiant as a lion*, and yet with a smile of recognition, in passing, to all he knew, confiding as that of an infant; *puffing, as he proceeded, more from habit than fatigue, like some mighty engine hastening to its work!*' Even in 1865, Dr. Campbell writes to a friend, 'I am intellectually, and almost physically as fresh, strong, and vivacious as when you knew me. Never man suffered less from time and toil and domestic affliction.'¹

Though he retained such vigour, yet, when 1860 came, and a Parliamentary committee (with Mr. Edward Baines as chairman) was appointed to consider whether or not the expiring English patent should be renewed, Dr. Campbell kept entirely aloof, and left the momentous question to be settled by others. He did not even make any attempt to arouse the public, or Parliament, or the band of Sabbath-school teachers

¹ We might have quoted later evidence of the remarkable preservation of Dr. Campbell's powers, contained in a letter written on the eve of his second marriage, when, his biographers grandly say, 'His foot rested upon the step leading to the lordly mansion of Manor House, in which he found himself surrounded by every elegance, and his hand filled with an overflowing cup;' for there resided his intended partner, 'a lady of large property, and of noble, generous nature,' as well as of rare mental and personal charms. The letter was addressed to this lady, and breathed the most youthful and intense love, though, at the same time, it fortified her with reasons and 'instances' against those neighbours who 'would rather see her wedded to a green fool than to a ripe philosopher,' of 70; whose name 'a noble band of ladies would not blush' to take. But genuine reverence for a great and good man, as well as 'the muffled drum in near prospect' for him then, forbid us to allude further to this letter, which yet the biographers have taken the strange licence of publishing.

(whom he had in 1841 so solemnly adjured to prepare for 1860 and its Bible crisis) to a sense of their duty. He could not have done less for 'the sacred cause,' had he been either in the 'grave,' or in the 'decrepitude,' which he had formerly anticipated, but from which Providence had graciously preserved him. Partly, no doubt, in consequence of his desertion of the cause in 1841, and partly in consequence of his complete inaction and silence in 1860, the public mind was apathetic, and the English patent was RENEWED, and 'long life, health, and prosperity' were again secured to the monopolists. His biographers are constrained to say: 'We are at a loss to understand how, in 1860, he could reconcile it with the dictates of conscience, and the weighty obligations which he imposed, in 1840, on the entire body of Sunday-school teachers, to allow such an act of injustice [the renewal of the monopoly] to be committed in the light of day, and in opposition to his own repeated and most solemn protestations.' They also wonder at his *obliviousness* of the fact, 'that the duty which he devolved' on the Sabbath-school teachers, 'at the distance of some twenty long years, was equally binding on himself, and at the time,' as well as in the year 1860, which found him vigorous for, yet absent from, his plain duty. His biographers have the honourable candour to admit that Dr. Campbell's conduct, both in withdrawing, early in 1841, from fighting against the English monopoly, and in declining, in 1860, to oppose its renewal, was strangely inconsistent and wholly unjustifiable. 'But,' say they, 'there are spots on the disc of the sun.' Were this luminary, however, to withhold its light altogether at noon-day, in the very 'heat and burden' of mankind's labours, and if on the morrow it failed to 'rise' at all 'when men were going to their labour,' we should be led to fear something worse than mere 'spots on his disc.'¹

¹ We should here mention that the report of the House of Commons Committee of 1860 upon the English monopoly, spoke strongly against this

The six months' soldier against monopoly abandoned the conflict, but fixed upon the 200,000 Sunday-school teachers as a 'sacramented host' to resume and victoriously finish the fight in 1860; yet, when this period came round, and found him capable not only of bearing arms, but also of 'ordering the battle,' and leading the charge, 'he abode among the sheep-folds,' instead of betaking himself to the battle-field, whilst his ignoble attitude gave the signal to his host of teachers, 'To your tents, O Israel!' Widely different was the conduct of Dr. Thomson, who had assailed the monopoly and triumphed over it in Scotland, long before he was joined by Dr. Campbell, and who remained in the field, fighting and enduring bravely, long after he was deserted by Dr. Campbell. When 1860 came, it found the veteran abolitionist disabled, not only by the burden of more than FOURSCORE years, but by the pressure of palsy, which had shut up all the old outlets for the currents of his native energy, and gradually froze these as they were accumulating and heaving at their fountainhead. His right hand had lost its 'cunning,' and could no longer hold a pen even to trace a single letter of his memorable maxim, 'All monopolies are bad; religious monopolies are the worst; and of all religious monopolies, a monopoly of the word of God is privilege, and recorded the immense benefits which had resulted from the abolition of the Scotch patent. By a majority of *one* it recommended that the English patent should not be renewed. Mr. Baines says, that Sir G. C. Lewis was favourable to complete abolition, yet his colleagues 'shrunk from a contest with the universities and the BIBLE SOCIETY.' Though irresistible evidence, as well as the experience of free Bible printing in Scotland for twenty years, showed that the monopoly was not needed to secure accurately printed Bibles, yet the managers of the Bible Society could not bear the prospect of purchasing and circulating any but monopoly Bibles. Any Bibles that did not issue from 'Her Majesty's Printing Office' were not fit for the handling of the Bible Society and its aristocratic patrons and directors. These interfered so strongly, not *for*, but *against*, freedom of Bible printing, that the Government dreaded *their* opposition, more than that of the three monopolists, to the cancelling of the English patent. The 'neutrality' of the Society was not believed in by Government; and the Society saved those whom Dr. Campbell described as 'cormorants.'

the most outrageous ;' and his 'tongue clave to the roof of his mouth,' so that he could no longer repeat, far less advocate, that maxim before any assembly or group of his countrymen, even if his stricken limbs could have borne him into their presence ; yet he neither 'forgot' nor was less intensely interested in the sacred cause of free and cheap Bibles—a cause which was endeared to him, incomparably less by all his associations of having himself struggled and suffered for it as no other man had, than by his ever-deepening conviction of the priceless value of free and cheap Bibles to all mankind ! It was plain to all who came near him, that he placed that cause far above his 'chief earthly joys,' either as surviving in a shadowy character, or as formerly possessed in fulness and substantiality. When he could no longer employ voice or pen, he was represented by his eldest son, the Rev. Adam Thomson of Hawick, who, since 1861, has laboured in Sydney, and who, after taking a prominent part in bringing about the union of the various Presbyterian denominations in New South Wales into one Presbyterian Church, had the honour of being chosen to be the first moderator of the General Assembly of that Church. This son had, from 1837, taken the deepest interest in the Bible monopoly question, and closely watched all its turns of fortune. With full knowledge and sympathy he accompanied the course of his father's labours ; and of all Dr. Thomson's advisers and helpers in the cause of free and cheap Bibles, from first to last, his own son was by far the most valuable and the most highly prized. We have lying before us a large collection of this son's letters, written to his father regarding the various cases of opposition and desertion that occurred during the veteran's prolonged struggle for free and cheap Bibles ; and those letters discuss the allegations of foes and doubtful friends with masterly ease and brilliant point, and offer the most sagacious suggestions and the most seasonable and affectionate encouragements. He was induced by his

father to accept the invitation, pressed upon him by a London committee, of preparing and reading, in June 1859, before the 'Triennial Conference of the Society for the Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control,' an admirable and conclusive paper on 'The Bible Printing Patent; shall it be renewed?' He also gave evidence on the English patent before the Select Committee of the House of Commons appointed in 1860; and of all the witnesses that were examined, he furnished the fullest, the most precise and convincing information about the character and working both of a Bible monopoly and of free Bible printing. The aged abolitionist had thus a fit as well as closely related substitute in the crisis of 1860, whilst Dr. Campbell held aloof, and was not represented by any, either of his 200,000 teachers, or of his 2,000,000 scholars in Sunday schools.¹

In resuming our extracts from the Campbell correspondence at the date (March 1841) where we left off, we may henceforth drop the *Mr.* for the more learned prefix of *Dr.*—a distinction which all the readers of Campbell's writings will join 'the Dissenting circles of London' in declaring to

¹ We may mention that, in 1867, a series of crowded meetings, attended and addressed by clergymen and influential laymen of all denominations, including the Bishop as well as the Governor, took place in Sydney, to commemorate the jubilee of the 'New South Wales Auxiliary to the British and Foreign Bible Society,' which had been formed on the 7th March 1817, the year in which the great American Bible Society also had its rise. The Rev. Adam Thomson spoke, and did not scruple to devote his speech to the history of that abolition movement which had done more to enable the Bible Society to fulfil its mission than all other helps put together, since, *before* the abolition, the British and Foreign Bible Society had never annually circulated *half a million* of copies of the Scriptures, whilst only a few years after the abolition it circulated *a million and a half*! We quote the opening sentence of Mr. Thomson's speech: 'On an occasion like the present, which leads to a retrospect of the last fifty years in connection with Bible circulation, there were some in the meeting who would not wonder that there naturally occurred to his mind an event which gave an impulse far beyond any other event throughout the whole half century, to the circulation of the Holy Scriptures—an event which had brought the Bible within

have been richly merited by his uncommon talents and acquirements, and by his energetic and praiseworthy exercise of these. The man adorned both the degree and the university far more than these adorned him. Dr. Thomson had originated the measures for obtaining this title, with the strongest conviction that it would be well bestowed; and he had the satisfaction of knowing that it would neither be despised nor disliked by his friend, who was free from the affectation of apathy or coyness about it, but began not only to muse as to how it would sound in his ears, and how it would look on the title-page of his forthcoming volume, but also to view it as not less 'providential' than pleasant. Dr. Thomson was gratified that his zealous and effective fellow-labourer in the Bible cause should be a fellow-doctor, and that the addresses of thanks which were issuing from all parts of the country to the twain, should no longer be compelled to recognise a distinction of professional rank (such as 'the Rev. Dr. T. and the Rev. John C. '), but that, by a 'levelling-up' of the latter gentleman, they should be able to hail both as 'the Rev. reach of the poorest, and which had enabled the British and Foreign Bible Society to double, and far more than double, its issue of the English version of the Scriptures,—the event was, the abolition of the Bible monopoly in Scotland; and there were circumstances which might plead his apology, if he was in error in conceiving that the present celebration would be somewhat incomplete, if all reference to so important a change were omitted.' It is curious to notice how *all the other speakers* refrained from alluding, even in the most distant way, to the monopoly and its abolition, and to the vast reduction in price, and the equally vast increase in circulation, which this abolition had produced. They waxed eloquent upon thousands of little incidents which had helped the progress of the English Bible, but were dumb upon what had been accomplished through the Scotch movement; and in this silence the colonial Bible meeting resembled Bible meetings in England. Yet no greater folly would be shown if, when commemorating the great changes effected upon *travelling* in Britain, the speakers were to confine themselves to pack-horses, waggons, and stage-coaches, and to have no word for railway trains impelled by steam. The Sydney daily press, however, pointed out promptly and forcibly what the clergy had ignored; and newspaper articles told what the abolition of the Scotch patent in 1839 had done for Bible circulation.

Drs. T. and C.' Of course Dr. Thomson had not the slightest thought, either as a wish or as a hope, of the title being a bribe to, or a reward for, a continuance of service in the Bible cause; he was not less incapable of *giving*, than his friend was of *accepting* the title with such a base aim. Yet, strangely enough, the Coldstream abolitionist found that, when he had got a fellow-doctor, he had lost a fellow-labourer! *Doctor* Campbell withdrew from the struggle against monopoly, wishing 'health and prosperity to the monopolists,' and taking care to advertise and 'puff' the list of their cheap editions. He concluded a truce with Spottiswoode and Co., as if the cap of a D.D. had extinguished all zeal in contending for free and cheap Bibles. Let it not for a moment be supposed that we mention this strange coincidence as illustrating the experience that *prepayments* are neither wise nor safe. Dr. Campbell's desertion took place *after*, but not *in consequence* of his receiving the degree; *post hoc, non propter hoc*; and plain John Campbell would have done exactly as his capped *alter ego*. Dr. Thomson, too, though astounded and disappointed at the abandonment of his post by his six-months' companion-in-arms, never ceased to be greatly pleased with the conferring of the degree, and never repented of having suggested, and done much to procure that honour.¹ He would have been delighted to see the new Doctor sally forth against the monopolist 'firm' and universities with fresh ardour and influence; but when he beheld him exchanging words of peace and amity, and not blows, with the enemy, of whose 'terrible privilege' the 'very thought' had recently 'filled his soul with HORROR,' and retiring from the field, all his intense regret was for this 'tergiversation'

¹ We learn from a letter of congratulations to Dr. T., from Dr. Hay of Kinross, that Dr. Beattie and other friends in Glasgow had moved in the matter of Dr. Thomson's degree, and that this would have come from Jefferson College, if it had not been anticipated by Miami.

on the part of a man who, only some weeks before, had exclaimed, 'Oh, who can estimate the impiety of a monopoly of the word of God, converting the charter of man's redemption, the record of God's mercy, and of Christ's blood into a mercantile monopoly!' and 'what Christian's *bosom is not convulsed in agony* to think of exacting tribute from the world's salvation!' and though the author of *Jethro* had laid down his arms in the free Bible cause, his Coldstream friend felt no vexation mingling with his satisfaction at the university honours worn by the former. Even at the moment when he was astounded by Dr. Campbell's desertion, Dr. Thomson felt and showed no more of a tendency to regret the bestowal of the degree upon Campbell, than he ever felt in the case of Richard Winter Hamilton of Leeds.

But quitting this point, we proceed to quote from Dr. Campbell's letters to his Coldstream friend. On 'March 31, 1841,' the former writes :—

'MY DEAR FRIEND—What does this mean? I have been in a state of the most painful anxiety ever since I last wrote you. Every hour have I been looking for a letter. Every morning I wait, if possible, till the post come, and sit with listening impatience till I hear his knock ; or if I *must* go out, I return as early as practicable, and the first question is, "Any letters?" If answered "Yes," the next is, "Anything from Dr. Thomson?" All this time I have waited in vain! How is this? There must be something extraordinary to prompt a course so unkind—I had almost said, so cruel! Imagination suggests all manner of things. I have daily thought for a week of writing again. I do so now, for I can endure suspense no longer. Pray write immediately, and relieve the oppressive anxiety of your faithful and much attached friend,

'JOHN CAMPBELL.'

In the foregoing lines Dr. Campbell expresses great anxiety

about his friend's unusual silence ; yet his friend had reason for greater perplexity about Dr. Campbell's announcement in the *Patriot*, that he henceforth abandoned his conflict against the monopolists on the ground that these had reduced their Bibles to very low prices—though they retained the monopoly itself in every inch of its scope, and through every day and hour of its twenty years' duration,—whilst he exhorted all the English Dissenters, whom he had, for the last six months, inflamed against the 'privilege' and its holders, to follow his present example in being satisfied with the reduction of prices, and in concluding a truce with the monopolists ! Could Dr. Thomson be otherwise than astounded by this change, which had also been first, and in the most emphatic terms, communicated to the public, as if to show that all remonstrance from the 'General' would be too late and in vain ? Dr. Thomson might have 'done well to be angry ;' but he did better in being silent. He feared that the brilliant service which Dr. Campbell had rendered in the last half-year to the cause of free and cheap Bibles would be more than counteracted by the peace which he had just made with the monopolists ; and that his strange attitude for the next twenty years would more than compensate to the monopolists for all the injury which his six months' dashing assaults had inflicted on them. Even now, admitting and admiring—as we do most ungrudgingly—the prodigious vigour and effect of the assistance which, in the close of 1840, and in the beginning of 1841, Dr. Campbell gave to Dr. Thomson in fighting against the English monopoly, and in impressing the English mind with sound views and sentiments regarding it, we often imagine that this assistance did less good than his subsequent desertion did harm ; and that if Dr. Campbell had remained, from first to last, wholly *neutral*—neither for half a year denouncing the monopolists, nor for the next twenty years wishing them 'long life, health, and prosperity'—the cause of Bible emancipation in England

would, in 1860, have been triumphant, and a new patent would not have been then obtained by the monopolists. For six months he nobly aided in arousing the English mind against the monopoly ; but subsequently he infused into that mind such an apathy regarding it, such an insensibility to all its evils, that, in the critical 1860, the languid Parliament was far in advance of the slumbering nation, and the popular voice did not demand what the Select Committee of the House of Commons recommended—that the English Bible Patent should at once cease.

Whether or not Dr. Campbell's strange procedure was unfair to Dr. Thomson, the latter never asked, being deeply concerned about the injury it must inflict upon the great cause which lay so near his heart. He 'held his peace ;' and, surely, Dr. Campbell could not expect congratulations and compliments from the persevering abolitionist for the deserter. When, however, Dr. Campbell complained of the silence of his friend, the latter at once told, with faithful plainness, how greatly he marvelled at, disapproved of, and mourned over the author of *Jethro's* 'tergiversation.' But Dr. Campbell saw himself in a mirror which gave no glimpse of 'tergiversation ;' and his reply was that of a man who felt that he was shamefully wronged and calumniated, if any observers of his former and latter treatment of the monopolists dared to call him or it 'inconsistent.'

On April 3 (1841), Dr. Campbell writes :—

'My judgment and conscience approve my course ; and I know that *the people of England are with me.*' [He explains afterwards that 'the people of England care nothing about the principle' of a monopoly—that very 'principle' which he had lately affirmed to be 'dearer to the people of the Most High than life itself ;' hence his identification of himself with the 'people of England' is not in keeping with the strain of high self-eulogy

which he is pursuing.] ‘I say *the people*. I make no account of individuals, especially if actuated by *interest*.’ [This may be a hit at Mr. Childs, who certainly returned every hit most liberally and very smartly, though far from charitably; or it may be a hit at all who continued to fight against the monopoly-principle which Dr. Campbell, as soon as he himself deserted the conflict, began to regard as a *casus belli* only for those who were actuated by the meanest self-interest.] ‘You charge me with “remarkable tergiversation.” I am not aware of the fact. You are the first man of sense who has charged it. Of course you are not the man to make a charge without attempting to prove. In the event of your writing against me, it may be necessary for me to reply. This I shall certainly do; but I will do it with all the temper, and respect, and veneration, and tenderness which I can possibly exert. I shall deplore the necessity of saying one word against a man whom I hold in so much unfeigned esteem. But I must, and assuredly will, *do justice to myself*, in the event of your assailing me. You have done me great *injustice*. Had any other man sent me such a letter as yours, I should resent it as an outrage, as an insult, as a violation at once of propriety and justice. But, from *you*, I receive it as the letter of a mistaken *friend*. I have not shown it to any man, and it is probable I never may. To any other man but you I would say, “Do your worst; I dare you; I defy you. I have walked in mine integrity. I am unchanged, unbought—the same man as at the beginning. Your assault will only enable me to demonstrate *my perfect consistency*. I shall be able most satisfactorily to show that there is the *most unvarying consistency in all the parts of my course*.” A public contest between you and me will be a sad spectacle. I deeply deprecate it, but I shall not shrink from it. To me character is more than friendship. My dear friend, if one remnant of influence with you yet remains, let me beseech you to beware of the counsels of Bungay! I

know them. Let them not deceive you.¹ Rest assured that the country is with me. I have made the most of circumstances. Without sacrificing an iota of principle, I have pursued the path of sound policy. You cannot compete with Spottiswoode and the universities. The thing is utterly impossible. You must, of necessity, be many, many per cent. above them. I wish you but knew how little the millions of England care about the *principle*. On third thoughts, it appears to me but right that I should return your letter, that you may have an opportunity of destroying it with your own hands, and the satisfaction of being assured that it has ceased to exist. I consider it as *withdrawn*. I feel towards you as if it had never been. I cannot give you up! Two men, whom God in his mercy has so honoured, MUST NOT QUARREL! Come and correct, and, if you will, reprove me, and I will explain; but let us not become *aliens and adversaries*. Our glorious conflict must not end in this way. Let me assure you of my unabated affection; and believe me, as heretofore, your faithful friend,

‘J. CAMPBELL.’

This strange letter has not a little of the egotism and self-glorification which, a few years later, made Dr. Campbell’s ‘Editorial Notices’ to correspondents, on the inside of the cover of the *Christian Witness*, the richest comic ‘treat’ to Dr. Richard Winter Hamilton of Leeds, who affirmed that he

¹ Mr. Childs was strongly impressed with the evils attendant on Dr. Campbell’s truce with the monopolists; and in the *Nonconformist* he pointed out unanswerably the glaring inconsistencies in the Doctor’s conduct, and arrayed the Doctor’s views in March against the Doctor’s views in November and December with powerful effect. But in his letters to Coldstream, Mr. Childs freely ascribed equivocal motives to Dr. Campbell for the change, and had no patience with Dr. Thomson for implicitly believing in Campbell’s thorough honesty and integrity, even when misled to make the disastrous change. Dr. Thomson might easily have detected certain weaknesses in Dr. Campbell’s nature, through which he could be misled; but he never suspected the presence of elements of *baseness* and *meanness*.

laughed far more over the long list of such 'notices' than over the contents of *Punch*. There are, indeed, in the letter indications of a hearty friendship, which Dr. Thomson reciprocated. They might continue friends, though they were no longer together in the struggle for free Bibles in England. If Dr. Campbell refused to go back to his former post beside Dr. Thomson, and again assail the monopoly, it was more certain that Dr. Thomson would never go over to Dr. Campbell to be at peace with that monopoly. Still, they could live as friends; and from Spottiswoode's camp Dr. Campbell might exchange loving communications on a thousand other subjects with the resolute abolitionist. Whilst the latter held on his own way, exhibiting not only arguments, but the free, cheap, and beautifully as well as accurately printed Bibles of Scotland, against the maintenance of the English monopoly, he was not called to attack Dr. Campbell, or even to mention that he himself stood alone, without his former vigorous associate; for surely the monopoly itself was a subject large and interesting enough to dispense with any postscript about the Campbell truce. He continued, too, to assail the monopoly with those weapons which Dr. Campbell had fashioned during his six months' service; and Dr. Thomson's aim in doing this was to extend the effectiveness of that too brief service, and to enable his friend to help on the cause, to which this friend had been 'lost.' The foregoing letter manifests an unconsciousness of the change which had passed over Dr. Campbell's views and policy regarding the English monopoly—scarcely less surprising than the change itself. In the 'remarkable tergiversation,' he cannot see, and he defies anybody to show, 'a shadow of turning.' He would acknowledge none of the astounding 'inconsistencies' which we have been exposing—leniently, out of regard for his memory. But we may bring this question to a new test. We may ask whether the MONOPOLISTS regarded and treated Dr. Campbell as 'unchanged' at the end of the six months? We

know, from the famous letter of 'Andrew Spottiswoode' in the *Times*, what he and his royal printing partners thought, in November 1840, of Mr. Campbell's assaults upon the monopoly: that these assaults consisted of 'barefaced assertions,' 'deliberate misrepresentations, to catch the unwary,' 'extreme absurdities,' 'artful fallacies,' and 'a system of deception.' The monopolists dealt with Mr. Campbell, in the close of 1840, as an *enemy*, and a very unscrupulous one too; but before many months in the following year had passed, the 'remarkable tergiversation,' which Dr. Thomson condemned and mourned over, made him a man greatly beloved and honoured by those same monopolists. The change upon *their* views and sentiments regarding him, resulted from the change upon *him*. On this point, the authors of *The Life and Times of Dr. Campbell* furnish us with evidence, of which Dr. Thomson neither saw nor heard anything. The monopolists suitably acknowledged the 'tergiversation' of the man who had lately execrated the 'hideous impiety' of the monopoly, but who now blessed it, and wished 'long life, health, and prosperity' to its holders; 'and they,' the biographers narrate, 'actually presented him with one of their *most beautifully printed and most costly copies* of the sacred volume!' Would they have done so in 1840? or would he, in 1840, have sent the following reply, so full of gratitude to the men, and of loyalty to the cause of monopoly? We extract it from the biography by Drs. Brown and Ferguson:—

'GENTLEMEN,—I beg to tender you my most cordial thanks for your handsome note and its splendid accompaniment. *No book-present, I assure you, ever received by me, gave me half the satisfaction.* Whilst the sheets are worthy of the celebrated office whence they proceed, the binding is exquisite beyond anything that has yet met my eye. It is superb; it is royal—
EVERY WAY WORTHY OF PRESENTATION TO MAJESTY, and well befitting an associated act of the Queen's Printers, and worthy of the records of eternal life which it embodies. I duly esti-

mate the gift, and desire for the donors every blessing contained in the book, and remain, with much respect, your obliged friend and servant,

‘JOHN CAMPBELL.’¹

Dr. Campbell’s letters to his Coldstream correspondent were of the frankest description, telling, not only of all that he was doing and projecting, but of all the marks of honour and respect that he was receiving from his congregations, from societies, and from individuals ;—and that he should keep completely silent about this memorable gift, which had given him double the satisfaction he had received from any book-present, was somewhat strange.

But we have no wish to draw more from this not insignificant incident than the proof which it unquestionably contains—that, in the view of the monopolists, Dr. Campbell was, in the summer of 1841, greatly ‘changed’ from what he had been in the previous winter. The change was believed, alike by the two opposite parties that held but few opinions in common, to be complete,—Dr. Thomson feeling assured that it removed Dr. Campbell altogether from his side and the cause of free Bibles, and the monopolists being convinced that it brought their former assailant over into their camp. Yet how defiantly Dr. Campbell maintained his entire ‘consistency!’ The menacing tone of his letter, when contemplating the possibility of his friend pronouncing a public censure upon his desertion, is ludicrous ; for, even in defence of the best cause, he had far from ‘first-rate’ powers of argument, sarcasm, and humour, though he fought both vigorously and valiantly. His *aggressive*

¹ When Bibles began to be printed in Coldstream, Dr. Thomson made a present of one to *Mrs. Joseph Hume*, in acknowledgment of the great services of her husband against the Bible monopoly. Mr. Hume’s reply showed that he warmly appreciated the gift. Did Mr. Joseph Hume, M.P., receive the gift of a Bible from either of the old Scotch patentees, Sir D. H. Blair or Mrs. Bruce? His reply would have differed much from that of Dr. Campbell to Spottiswoode and Co.

weapons were none of the keenest or the brightest, and he brandished them stoutly but clumsily, and dealt hard though rather blind blows, instead of wielding them with nimble and graceful dexterity, and with a skill which baffled the strength, and instinctively found out the weak and vulnerable points, of an opponent; whilst his *defensive* armour and tactics were loose though heavy; leaving many of his peculiarities broadly exposed to strokes of ridicule. His biographers describe his polemical qualifications and exploits in terms which, even if applied to Hall and Foster, would admit of qualification. Compared with contemporary writers in the London *Examiner*, *Spectator*, and *Saturday Review*, Dr. Campbell held but an humble rank in 'intellectual gladiatorship;' it might almost be said that he fought with the primitive flint 'arrow-heads,' against men who commanded all the appliances of modern warfare. Dr. Thomson had no call for, and saw no good that could result from, his 'writing against' his friend's 'tergiversation;' otherwise, the latter's tone of menace would never have restrained him. He was making it sufficiently plain to the country that he was and would be persistently faithful to the cause of free Bible printing, when he was left alone by Dr. Campbell. We see from letters written to Dr. Thomson by his eldest son and his eldest daughter,¹ that these earnestly counselled him to hold on in his individual course, and to expend none of his precious time and labour in making a

¹ Miss T. (now Mrs. Wilson) took the deepest interest in all her father's labours and trials in the Bible cause, and, from first to last, lent him an incalculable amount of invaluable assistance, concealed under the veil of her feminine and filial modesty. During his frequent and long absences from home, she not only kept him minutely apprised of the daily operations of the 'Scottish Board,' or of the 'Free Bible Press' in Coldstream, but she sent replies to all the letters addressed to him, that needed either to be answered or to be acknowledged immediately; and her father's correspondents seldom failed to congratulate him on his possessing a most accomplished and admirable 'secretary.' A short time ago, we incidentally discovered that, in a single year, Miss Thomson had, for her father, written more than *five hundred letters*—many of these containing elaborate accounts

public protest against the procedure of his late associate. There was all the greater need to toil in the Bible cause after being left alone ; and time could not be worse wasted than in carrying on a public quarrel with the assistant who had suddenly gone away. The resolution to take no special notice in public of the London Doctor's recent movement, was strongly confirmed by recollections of the vigour and heartiness of the aid which, for half a year, he had rendered ; for Dr. Thomson could not but feel that the letters and speeches which Dr. Campbell had devoted to the monopoly question, far transcended in influence all that had been spoken or written by any other supporter. The abolitionist never forgot that Dr. Campbell's oration at Liverpool was such a manifesto as a whole church might have been proud to issue ; and how grateful he would have been to any clerical brother, who had helped him, and promoted free Bible printing with such a noble contribution, either by voice or by pen !

On 'April 22, 1841,' Dr. Campbell writes :—

'MY DEAR AND HONOURED FRIEND,—I see Mr. Childs has begun to assail the monopoly in the *Nonconformist*. Had I the honour to advise him, I would say, "Save your time ; save your paper. Your labour will be lost. Retire with a grace. Make the most of circumstances. Yield to a hard necessity. Nothing now remains to be earned but contempt. A formal abolition of the monopoly you never can obtain. Be thankful

of the range and working of the Coldstream enterprise for free Bible printing ; and for ten years she undertook a large share of his correspondence. At the crisis in 1841, which was signalized by Dr. Campbell's withdrawal from the conflict against monopoly, both Miss Thomson and her brother, the Rev. A. Thomson of Hawick, when writing to their father about that event, and indulging in language of censure and regret, express their strong convictions of Dr. Campbell's honesty, and urge their father to reserve all his condemnation of, and remonstrance with, his friend, for that friend's private ear or eye, as any public quarrel would have no tendency to bring back the latter to his duty, and must be otherwise unprofitable.

you have got so much." I have only a moment more to assure you of my very sincere affection. 'J. CAMPBELL.'

The policy which Dr. Campbell would have urged upon Mr. Childs was less heroic than safe. It would not have sustained the struggles of Dr. Thomson for many *years*, or even of Dr. Campbell for as many months.

On November 13, 1841, Dr. Campbell says:—

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—I really can no otherwise address you, and if third parties had not interfered, you had never felt otherwise than I do to you.' [Wholly a mistake. The Bungay letters never succeeded in leaving on Dr. Thomson's mind the slightest impression of Dr. Campbell being a 'knave.' Dr. Thomson both believed, and avowed his belief, that Dr. Campbell had made an unaccountable and disastrous yet perfectly honest change; and, of course, he had no faith in the confident assertion that the *Patriot* office was garrisoned by 'scoundrels;' but, to the last of his days, maintained thankfully that the *Patriot*, as well as the *Nonconformist*, had fought nobly against the Bible monopoly.] 'I lose no opportunity of expressing my good-will toward you, both by tongue and by pen. In a review of M'Kerrow's *History*, written but a few days before your last arrival in town, I took occasion to mention your honoured name. In a book which will shortly appear, I introduced that name also about forty-eight hours before you came. It was then in the printer's hands; and the proof was got about the time of your departure. Your letters did not sufficiently affect my feelings, to induce me to conceal or even alter one word of the passage. I regretted that you did not call: I had much to say to you. The interview would have been useful. It would have set much straight that seemed to you crooked. I told you that, if the public did anything for us, it would be a proof that we had done nothing for them; for they never reward their benefactors!' [Rather cynical.]

On October 21 (1841), Dr. Campbell writes :—

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have just returned from a marriage, and am pushed beyond measure to-day, having to finish an article for the *Patriot*, on poor George Bennet, and to prepare for to-morrow’s preaching, besides outdoor business ; but I cannot allow the post to return without a reply to your last night’s manly and noble-minded letter, this morning received. I have read it with boundless satisfaction. I shall review your *Bible* at my *earliest* convenience, which will be in the course of next week, for I am exceedingly pressed with my book, which Snow wishes out by the end of the month. He gives no rest, day or night. I am also under promise both to Dr. Morison and to Dr. Leifchild for reviews ; both very impatient. I will review the Bible, and do as you suggest about our differences. Nothing prevented my doing so long since, but the attacks of the *Non-conformist*. Mr. Hare sends his best regards, and bids me say nothing shall be wanting, on the part of the *Patriot*, to press your Bible forward, and that he wishes you God-speed in all your benevolent labours. Your affectionate friend,

‘J. CAMPBELL.’

Dr. Campbell writes, on February 9, 1843 :—‘ Let me, then, beseech my honoured friend to get out of the matter as fast as possible. He has done his part, and has met with the usual reward of all great benefactors. Let him be thankful !—he has escaped with his head ! The time has been when —! For my own part, so far as England is concerned, I am happy to think I took the proper dimensions of the public conscience from the first, and acted accordingly. Every day has only tended to convince me of the accuracy of my estimate, and the propriety of my course. But my course is of no moment. I am personally nothing. I will therefore say no more on this branch of the subject. *Three-fourths of the large edition of my Bible Letters*, I believe, lie still on hand, and will there remain,

till the *moths* remove the load ! *Moths*, however, do not pay printers' bills. I feel this. I told you my opinion of the English schools, and what was thence to be hoped for. Again I say, my dear friend, wind matters up ; it is time that your mind should be at ease, and that your body should have some rest. You have done your share, and done *enough*. Leave something to *posterity*. Every fresh project will only submit you to fresh mortification. The multitude will not see with you ; indeed, they will not see at all ! They care not a rush for your "principle," and have no wish for further "cheapness." . . .

On June 14, 1847, Dr. Campbell says :—"I have had time to understand English society in its principle, character, and working. *Our* dissent is not for a moment to be compared with *yours*. Occasionally we can *feel* with intensity ; we *talk* well ; we reflect *little* ; we seldom *understand*. Passion, not reason, interest, not principle, are the things that move us. Dissent with us is, to a vast extent, *churchified*. They care not a straw about the principle of the monopoly. They feel no gratitude whatever for your labours. For yourself the mass care not a straw, and for your fellow-labourers infinitely less. When the foolish project was set on foot for getting up some testimonial to me, leaving out your name, I smiled at the good intentions of my friends, knowing perfectly the thing would never come to anything. I was a true prophet ; after the first burst was over, *I never, from that hour to this, heard a word more about it*. But the other day I received the enclosed note from Mr. Hankey, which shows that, after all that was said and done, the popular estimate of my services amounts to just £3, 1s.—not "a penny a line"—[If Dr. Campbell had waited for a very few years, he would have found that his labours in the Bible cause had secured him, not *three pounds*, but *three thousand pounds* ; and that the latter large sum was handed to him by an EARL !]—"nor a penny a hundred lines

—scarcely as much as pay for paper and pens ! So much for the glory of my logic and eloquence. The thing has supplied me with the source of a hearty laugh or a sarcastic joke . . . But if to this it should come, I hope your courage will be equal to the occasion. You can afford to go forth with an erect countenance ; for sure it is that, in this great enterprise, *self* has held no place. A son of Mammon would have carried his wares to another market, and have turned the stream of his exertions into a more promising channel. Some wiseacres may question your prudence ; but none will dare impeach your virtue. Be of good courage, my friend. The work is, beyond all other works, *of* God, *for* God, and *to* God. This is a height of aim and effort beyond which there is no ascent. Should the projector be ruined on earth, he will be inconceivably recompensed in heaven ; but earthly ruin is no necessary consequence of the enterprise. Surely, if any man has a right to plead the promises of the book, it is he who hazards his earthly all to spread it. God will, without fail, take care of that man. To say the truth, my dear friend, you are to be envied more than pitied. The conflicts you now sustain will furnish glorious recollections for eternity. The Lord bless, guide, and deliver you.'

We need dwell no longer on the truce which was concluded with the English monopolists, *first* by Dr. Campbell, and *then*—largely through his influence—by the English Nonconformists. The renewal of the English patent, in 1860, resulted mainly from that truce. Apart from the question of mere *cheapness*, is it not monstrous that, in the present generation, the English printing press must take no part in giving to the public *God's own book*?—this being the 'privilege' of one or two 'firms,' that are *exclusively authorized* to print the Scriptures. We wonder that either English printers, or the English people, who have all along owed so much to the press, should submit to this Bible monopoly. Nor, as the House of Commons Committee of

1860 pointed out, is it fair that English Bibles should freely enter into and circulate through Scotland, while not a single Scotch Bible can cross into England.

Dr. Campbell's biographers throw no light upon his motives for abandoning the cause which he had advocated for half a year with remarkable zeal and power. Dr. Thomson, whilst rejecting the *Bungay* theories on the question, and refusing to adopt any view that represented Dr. Campbell as 'bought off,' or 'bribed off,' or influenced in the least by base or unworthy considerations, was, on the other hand, unable to imagine any reasons sufficiently weighty to bring about the change. He had perfect confidence in his friend's 'integrity,' in the step; still, his invariable idea about the change was, that it was 'unaccountable,' and that his friend had been 'misled' into it, not less mysteriously than honestly. Dr. Thomson might occasionally be disposed to acquiesce in the judgment of many not unfavourable observers of Dr. Campbell, that the latter, through his characteristically strong thirst for applause, had been induced to resort to a policy which would secure him the favour and emphatic praise of the monopolists, and their numerous and influential supporters, without alienating from him the admiration and eulogy which the various bodies of English Dissenters had recently bestowed. Representatives of the vast and powerful hosts that were on the side of the monopoly, gave him, in acknowledgment of his new refusal to fight against the monopoly, such laudation as he never before tasted; and we now know how delighted he was by the *Spottiswoode* present of a Bible; whilst the Dissenters, who had cheered him during his six months' assaults upon the monopoly, continued to shout for him, being quite satisfied with the victory obtained, in the reduction of prices, without the overthrow of the monopoly, and rejoicing in the *cheap* Bibles, though these were not a whit more *free*! It cannot be doubted that, to many persons in whom the love of

applause was predominant, the situation described would have been tempting ; but was Dr. Campbell one of those persons ? We admit that he was wont to dispense unmeasured praise to others, and that he was not offended when the same was returned to himself ; but these tendencies would not justify the inference that he was misled by a passion for notoriety. We rather think that his ‘tergiversation’ in the battle with the monopoly may be thus explained : He had begun to despair of a *speedy* victory over a system that had so many firmly attached and influential defenders, against such an irregular and timid band of besiegers. He delighted to put forth all his energies under the impulse of immediate or early success ; but he disliked to engage in a long series of struggles, arduous and ‘baffled oft,’ and to become familiar with defeat and disaster before he could be crowned with triumph. He shrunk from long campaigns and their chequered fortunes ; but he revelled in the last hour of a victorious fight, and dashed into it, like the Prussians at the close of Waterloo. On seeing that the reduction of prices for the English Bible had been achieved through a few months’ toil, he could not brook the idea of fighting for *years* to secure the overthrow of the monopoly. So, too, after he had, as a Voluntary Churchman, fought against the civil establishment of the Church of England, he suddenly announced his complete withdrawal from the conflict, not because he had become convinced of the lawfulness of state churches, but because he had inferred that the Church of England, even as a state church, was, and would be for ages, perfectly invulnerable against all that Dissenters could do ; and he summoned his English Dissenting brethren to abandon all attempts to disestablish the invincible Church, and to join her own evangelical members in *reforming* her ; just as if the task of *reforming* the Church of England had fewer difficulties than that of disestablishing her ! He addressed his brother Nonconformists about the futility and vanity of all their future

assaults upon the state church, in the peculiar style which he employed when dissuading Mr. Childs from attacking the English Bible monopoly. Dr. Campbell found that he could not, by a single blow, immediately overthrow them. When he could not command a victory with the '*veni, vidi, vici*' *promptitude*, he laid down his weapons and refused to fight at all. There is in this policy less of chivalrous than of safe loyalty to truth ; and the wisdom which it assumes about the future is often mocked by the unexpected events of 'to-morrow,'—when some cause which, secure in its 'might and mastery,' was promising to itself a long and undisturbed ascendancy, becomes in a moment weak and despised ; whilst another cause, that seemed to need many auspicious ages in which it might grow, gather, and arm, for fighting its way slowly into favour or tolerance with the ruling classes, as suddenly acquires gigantic strength, and is reinforced with agencies that give it an immediate predominance and victory. Dr. Campbell might have seen how rapidly antagonism to state churches has advanced in a single generation ; yet, when contemplating the English state church, with all her allies and resources, he despaired of Voluntaryism ever succeeding in the south. Had he, however, survived till 1868, he would have been startled by the evolution of a final crisis for the sister state church of Ireland, and might have been led to entertain some doubts of the *perpetuity* of the English institution.

The peculiar treatment which his biographers give to the question of Dr. Campbell's exertions for free and cheap Bibles, has constrained us to dwell upon what was a brief episode in Dr. Thomson's Bible struggle, both at a length and in a tone which would otherwise have been unbecoming. Their one-sided and exaggerated representations—mixed up with positive misstatements at one time, and ignorance of, or silence about, facts at another time—have induced us, in justice to Dr. Thomson and his protracted and consistent course of effort, to

show exactly the commencement and the termination of Dr. Campbell's labours in the Bible cause—the short term of his partnership with Dr. Thomson in this cause. We had anticipated that our task of animadverting on Dr. Campbell's strange desertion from the fight against monopoly would be unpleasant, and we had prepared to discharge it in the fewest possible words ; but after reading his *Life and Times*, and the chapter on the Bible monopoly conflict, we found that the task had become much more difficult and disagreeable, yet not less imperative. Far rather should we have written in accordance not only with the recollection that Dr. Campbell and Dr. Thomson, in spite of serious differences at a particular crisis, cherished to the last for each other unabated tenderness, but also with the assurance that the two friends are *now* where all such differences have passed away.

The reduction of their Bible prices by the English monopolists was astounding, not less for the extent to which it was at once carried, than for the time of its introduction. In November 1840, their representative and leader, Mr. Spottiswoode,¹ had declared in the *Times* that greater cheapness was wholly impracticable. The prices total of the Spottiswoode list of the various editions of Scripture came then to £20, 1s. 6d. ; and solemnly, as on his oath, he assured the public that, by no cutting here or paring there, could the sum be reduced even by the odd *eighteenpence* ! Yet, in February 1841, the prices total of the very same list were advertised in the *Times*, as brought down to £9, 14s. 5d.,—a notable feat in cheapening by those who recently protested that the lowest possible prices had been reached. The announced change involved several important confessions, which the patentees would have been

¹ The company of Queen's Printers consisted of Strahan, Eyre, and Spottiswoode ; but on the death of Mr. Strahan, his nephew, Mr. Spottiswoode, had the Strahan share of the patent added to his own ; and Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswoode have since formed the company.

ashamed to put into words. It acknowledged the exorbitant profits which they had hitherto exacted, and the strange want either of sagacity or of veracity in their November asseveration about the impossibility of cheaper Bibles. £20, 1s. 6d. for the Bibles in our list—not a farthing less, since, on our word of honour as the Queen's Printers, they cannot be produced for less; and all that Thomson and Campbell allege about low prices in Scotland is 'systematic deception:' yet, in three months, the monopolists, who had in such terms offered their assortment of Bibles, came forward with the same Bibles, exclaiming, 'Here they are; you may have them for £9 instead of £20, and our recent word of honour into the bargain!'

If, however, they showed no foresight in their November protest, their reduction in February was a master-stroke of sagacity. They calculated, from what was being done in Scotland, and from what was being spoken and written in England, that a great reduction was inevitable, if, indeed, their 'privilege' itself was not in danger. To save the latter, should they not promptly sacrifice a large share of their gains? Several editions, at marvellously low prices, were nearly ready in Scotland; and, through the Thomson and Campbell agitation, Englishmen were being prepared to rise against a monopoly which doomed them to dearness and scarcity of Bibles, whilst their neighbours across the Tweed were blessed with a cheap supply. If England must be prevented from becoming indigantly conscious of, and resolute against, the disadvantageous position which, as compared with Scotland, she held in the matter, then there must be no continuance of high-priced Bibles; and the monopolists, to preserve their patent, must forthwith abandon a large proportion of their profits. They prudently yielded to circumstances which they would have resisted, not only in vain, but to the ruin of their interests. They even got credit for volunteering, rather than submitting to an inevitable reduction. They broke into a precipitate

race, to escape the driving of such a taskmaster as the 'Scottish Board for Bible Circulation' and the *Patriot's* lashing, though they had no liking for the goal to which they ran—that of unprecedented cheapness. The reduction which they introduced was no petty instalment; it was such as free Bible printing would have been proud to achieve—such as cost free Bible printing a great effort to rival, and a still greater to excel. It took the wind out of the sails of the English agitation against the monopoly itself, and moved Dr. Campbell and his brother Dissenters to live in peace with the monopoly, and to postpone all hostile action for at least twenty years; and this was a result which the monopolists did not reckon too dearly bought by their grand reduction of prices. They also hoped to injure, and indeed to arrest, the operations of the Scottish Board; but in its secretary, Dr. Thomson, they had a far less pliable man to deal with—one who had stronger convictions of the justice, importance, and ultimate triumph of his cause, and more indomitable resolution to hold on in its maintenance through every discouragement. Not only was he distrustful of the monopolists *continuing* their cheapness after they had succeeded in getting the market exclusively to themselves, but he was confident that, in reference to a few, at least, of such editions of the Bible as were most in demand by and for the poor, the Scottish Board might reasonably expect to keep its ground, even if the English patentees were bent on defeating it, and should put forth all their energies to drive it from the market by a temporary cheapness. Even if the worst were to happen, he was prepared, in accordance with Mr. Childs' bold yet shrewd advice, to show, though it should only be upon a single edition of Scripture, what his scheme, under free Bible printing, could accomplish in the most trying circumstances.

The reduction effected by Spottiswoode and Co. was forthwith carried out by the two privileged Universities; and the preference which Dr. Campbell so strongly conceived for

the former, was wholly groundless. Mr. Childs, who had larger means and better opportunities of knowing the three monopolist houses, came to an opposite conclusion, and held that the Universities, and not the Spottiswoode firm, were the 'best' of their objectionable 'order.' Dr. Thomson had subsequently not a few dealings, as well as interviews, with Mr. Parker of the Cambridge University Press, whom he was led to esteem greatly for candour and integrity. The head printer of the rival University was once in his anger frank enough to say to Dr. Thomson, 'You have ruined our trade, sir;' and to complain that henceforth *millions* of Bibles would yield less profit to the privileged printers than had mere *thousands* formerly. Some of the agents of the Oxford Bible warehouse, in their 'circular to the trade,' were, a little afterwards, so stupidly malicious as to insinuate that the editions of the Bible issued by the Scottish Board were 'inferior and *spurious*.' A 'spurious Bible' would be the perversion of a precious blessing into an intolerable curse; but, wherever it might be discovered, it could not, since the period of the abolition of the Scottish monopoly, have come from *Scotland*, where (as Dr. Thomson remarked in the course of a crushing reply to the Oxford Circular) 'a Government Board, consisting of responsible, competent, and vigilant officers, exists for the supervision of all editions of the Bible, so that, before any edition can be published, it must be submitted to the examination of this Board, under pain of forfeiture, and heavy and immediate penalties; and if an edition be found correct, the Board grants a licence for its publication, requiring the words, "*Printed by authority*," and the royal arms, to appear on the title-page; while, if errors be discovered, the whole edition can be suppressed, and no licence will, at any rate, be granted till the faulty portion be entirely destroyed, and replaced, at whatever amount of trouble and expense, by the correct reading of the "authorized version." This supervision gives such a security

for a genuine and accurate text, as is altogether wanting in England, where the three "privileged" printing companies may, with impunity, blunder to any extent, and from any motive, and may, from wilfulness or carelessness, produce "spurious Bibles," without incurring the smallest penalty or loss; and, to crown the monstrosity of the system, nobody else, among all the printers in England, is permitted to send forth any correct Bible! "Spurious" impressions of Scripture cannot originate in Scotland; and, if found here, they must have been imported from the monopolists' warehouses in England.' In curious illustration, Dr. Thomson mentioned that, in 'the first edition' issued in connection with his new scheme, there was, when it was submitted to the Government Board, the omission of three words in one verse; and 'an entire cancel at considerable expense was required. The Scotch authorized version, and some others, perhaps, had the three omitted words. But the *Oxford* edition, from which ours unhappily was composed, wanted the three words, and we had to replace them, and to pay the penalty;' whereas the Oxford printer, though he had left out the verse itself, or even the whole book, and though he had substituted the notorious 'Chaldee manuscript,' could not have been subjected to any penalty—could not, indeed, have been compelled to make a cancel! He would, unquestionably, for such a wilful tampering with Scripture, have provoked the indignation of the religious public; but, through carelessness, he might have made thousands of blunders which that public would have been slow to detect. Yet his agents foolishly attempted to fasten upon the *Scotch* editions the 'spurious' character which could only belong to the *English*, including his own. Many, too, of the provincial agents of the British and Foreign Bible Society adopted and circulated the self-refuting calumny; and those who had zealously defended the retention of the *Apocrypha* in the sacred volume, showed a peculiar grace in imputing spuriousness to the cheap Bibles of

the north. The patent merely guaranteed that the *English* Bibles were printed by the three 'privileged' companies; it neither provided for, nor attested their accuracy; whereas the licence of the Government Board of Supervision certified that the text of every *Scotch* edition of the Scriptures was immaculate.

Dr. Thomson, on hearing of the great reduction made by the English monopolists on the prices, did not come to Dr. Campbell's conclusion, that the free Bibles of Scotland could not be produced at so cheap a rate. On the contrary, he held that this rate could still be very considerably lowered; and he laboured until what he believed to be possible was accomplished. He added a binding establishment (at Coldstream) to the Scottish Board for Bible Circulation, and this experiment 'far exceeded his expectations,' and 'forced the monopolists to come down with their prices again, and again, and again.' Bible binding became as cheap as Bible printing, yet 'without any reduction in the wages of the workmen employed;' and, indeed, formerly 'the charge,' as we learn from his own statement, 'for binding particular Bibles had been more than the same sort is now sold for altogether!' He was forthwith gratified by seeing that such novel reductions of price gave an unprecedented impetus to Bible circulation, and that cheap Bibles multiplied themselves to a nearly incredible extent, and met with a corresponding demand. He had no fear lest the cheapening and multiplication of the Bibles should, as in the case of an old relic, lead to its being undervalued and neglected. The poor man would not think less of the sacred volume from all the members of his household having been put into possession of copies for themselves, and from the neighbouring families of his class having been similarly privileged. Sunlight is not less precious to any one from its being, at the same time, enjoyed by all within a hemisphere.

Dr. Thomson's ruling idea was, that as long as Bibles could be cheaper, they were still too dear; and his aim was to

bring them down to the *minimum* of cost. Free trade had not induced any printer in Scotland to undertake the preparation of a full assortment of such cheap editions as should keep in advance of those issued by the monopolists in England, and the ex-monopolists of Scotland. Printers and publishers stood aloof from all competition. They had been incredulous of the low prices which Dr. Thomson had at first fixed ; and when these prices passed from the possible into the actual state, and when printers were beginning to give up their prejudices, the Doctor advanced another long stride in reduction ; and this again filled their timid minds with misgivings, and arrested their enterprise. The 'trade' had but weak faith—and this faith, too, was slowly acquired—in cheap Bibles ; and the monopolists, if they had merely encountered the rivalry of the 'trade,' would have been allowed to retain a great part of their old profits. With the 'trade' as pioneers, the progress in reduction would have been comparatively slight. Years after the abolition of the Scottish patent, the extent of trade enterprise was indicated by one printer venturing upon a single edition—a school Bible,—another printer issuing a pocket Bible, and a third producing a reference Bible ; and in this irregular, fragmentary, and fractional way the 'trade' carried on what could not be called a competition. With their single-edition lists, how could they have kept the market alongside of the *nine pound* list of collected editions of all sorts and styles published in England, and the similar list of Bibles printed by the ex-monopolists of Scotland ? Dr. Thomson soon saw that, though the Scottish Board for Bible Circulation had done great things, and though, when associated with a binding establishment, it had done still greater, yet complete and permanent success could only be achieved by the institution of a *free Bible press* which should produce, at the lowest possible prices, all the editions of Scripture that were likely to be in frequent demand. Gladly would he have seen other

men than himself, especially printers or publishers, coming forward to adopt and carry out such a scheme ; but he looked in vain : he only met with the inconsiderate question, put to himself from various quarters, ‘ Why don’t you print your own Bibles ? ’ He would even have rejoiced to find the firm of Blair and Bruce resolved on gaining for themselves the privilege of issuing the *cheapest* Bibles, as they had long enjoyed, by a different tenure, the privilege of producing high-priced Bibles. His own words, spoken in 1851, when the ‘ Thomson Testimonial ’ was presented to him, will best describe the peculiar circumstances in which the *Coldstream Free Bible Press* originated :—

‘ There is one part of my conduct which has been all but universally condemned, and many of my best friends have given me up in it as wholly indefensible ; one of yourselves could only say, If he has erred here, “ forgive him this wrong.” It has been said that, not contented with the abolition of the Bible monopoly, and with the success of the Board which I had originated with the view of purchasing stereotype plates, and getting copies of the Scriptures printed from them wherever it was found this could be done cheapest, and then binding and circulating them without further charge to the public than was necessary to cover the actual outlay, I entered on an unwarrantable mercantile speculation, by setting up an extensive printing establishment. A plain statement of facts will, I think, satisfy every unprejudiced mind that, had I not acted as I did, I should have betrayed the cause which I had been so long engaged in, and professed to have so much at heart. While attending a meeting of Synod at Edinburgh, strong representations were made to me, by practical men, of the impossibility of my plans ever succeeding to the desired extent, until they should embrace a Bible-printing establishment. These representations were accompanied by such calculations in relation to the cost of printing—calculations which were fully borne out when afterwards put to the test of experiment—as strongly

impressed me in their favour ; but the means required for carrying out the proposal, especially after what had been laid out already, seemed to render it utterly impracticable. At the very time of that visit to Edinburgh, and when these representations had just been made to me, it happened that I received a letter from a wealthy gentleman in the north of England, well reported of for his Christian benevolence, intimating that he was about to preside at a public meeting in a large town, in the proceedings of which he requested me to take part, adding that it might furnish a good occasion to me of explaining my plans of cheap and extended Bible circulation. Ever ready, I trust I may say, to embrace every opportunity of advancing the cause, I gladly accepted the invitation. The representations which I had just heard in Edinburgh led me to remark in my public address, that greatly as the price of Bibles had been reduced already, it would be reduced much further were we to print ourselves ; and my statements on the subject produced a deep impression on the gentleman's mind. Having spent the night in his hospitable mansion, the subject naturally recurred in the course of conversation next morning, when the question was proposed to me, "Why do you not print your own Bibles?" The reply was, "The truth is, we have not the means;" to which he immediately responded, his son being present, "We will furnish the means." This, and this alone, originated Bible-printing at Coldstream. The very name, "The Free Bible Press," was of the gentleman's own suggesting. It was resolved that his son should visit Coldstream, to receive on the spot all information as to existing arrangements, to take a note of the calculations furnished by a practical printer, who was to be engaged to meet him—the same calculations which had been already furnished to myself,—and to report as to the measures desirable for setting on foot the proposed printing establishment. The result was an agreement entered into by the young gentleman, and subsequently

acceded to by his father, to which I and my son were also parties, that a "Free Bible Press" should be established without delay. Plans of the requisite buildings were accordingly ordered to be prepared, which being approved of, contracts were entered into with workmen for their erection. Subsequently the young gentleman accompanied me to Edinburgh, to order the extensive machinery necessary. With the approval of himself and his father, a manager was also engaged. All this was done on the faith of the agreement referred to, the tenor of which was as follows: That the printing establishment should be entirely under the control of the four parties to it; that regular books should be kept, to which the different parties should at all times have access; that the gentleman referred to should furnish the money necessary for the specified buildings and machinery; that seeing, from the calculations furnished, copies of the Scriptures could be produced at an immensely cheaper rate than they had hitherto been bought at, a reduction in the price of Bibles should take place immediately on the press coming into operation; that, at the same time, the reduction should only be such, in the first instance, as would leave a sufficient amount of proceeds to meet the stipulated interest, and the gradual repayment of the principal of the sum advanced; and so far from my motive being, as has been alleged, to enrich myself and my family, it was further expressly provided that, whenever the repayment was completed, there should be a further reduction, so as to give the public the entire benefit of the establishment. With the prospect thus held out of the Bible being so greatly reduced in price, I would, I repeat, have betrayed the cause if I had not accepted the offer made to me. But when all this had been done, the gentleman, from causes which it is not for me to explain, changed his purpose, and urged the cancelling of the agreement which had been entered into, proposing instead that we should merely receive a loan from him of a thousand

pounds, even for that sum requiring the joint note of my son and myself, and soon after demanding payment. Some time afterwards part was paid accordingly. This extraordinary change I was, personally, strongly disposed to resist, but was ultimately prevailed on to agree to. The consequence was, that we were left by ourselves with the heavy obligations which had been incurred lying on us. This necessitated the formation of the Free Bible Press Company, in which it was not thought suitable, from my years, that I should be a partner myself, though all my means were embarked in it; but the partners were three members of my family, one of whom advanced a very large sum, which was supposed at the time to be safely invested, but was ultimately lost in the overthrow of the Company.'

He saw the necessity of a large printing establishment, in order that the lowest prices for the various editions of Scripture which were in chief demand might be quickly reached, and permanently secured; yet, after waiting for years, he found no printers willing to embark in the enterprise. The dedication of his own means¹ would be insufficient for the scale which he proposed for the establishment; and when he met with a gentleman who not only volunteered to supply whatever funds might be lacking, but strongly urged an extension of the scale which had been hitherto contemplated for the Free Bible Press, and caused it to be distinctly understood that the business should never droop from want of money, he felt constrained to acquiesce in the arrangement, believing that it would certainly

¹ The sources of his income, independent of his ministerial stipend, had been very considerably lessened, through circumstances which, if they were disclosed in detail, would strikingly illustrate his self-sacrificing generosity, and show how he did not shrink from bearing the burdens and meeting the liabilities of friends. The sacrifices which he thus made for others had casual peculiarities which involved him in painful and prolonged anxiety; yet during the period when this pressed most severely, he was also enduring the heat and burden of his day of pastoral and public service, and performing such an amount of hard work as called for a mind unperplexed, unde-

issue in much greater cheapness, and immensely wider circulation for the Holy Bible.

This simple design, along with the condition that there should only be a moderate interest for the use of the capital, seemed to take the enterprise out from the list of trading concerns. Nor did the Doctor's connection with it look incongruous with his pastoral office. He had neither disposition nor aptitude for commercial speculations. It has often been said of clergymen—even of those who make the shrewd and promising start of a rich marriage—that they blunder sadly in worldly business, and seldom attain to a small share of lay success. Those who zealously try to succeed are not generally supposed to possess much of 'spiritual-mindedness;' yet this they may wholly lack without having any measure of commercial sagacity, for a man may have no religion at all, yet be a 'dunce' in the market. Dr. Thomson had as little wish as training to engage in a secular pursuit. He felt that his pastoral work was more than enough to engross and satisfy him, and that his enterprise for the cheapest Bible-printing harmonized with and greatly promoted that work. If zealous laymen had come forward to carry out his views regarding immediate and permanent cheapness, he would gladly have retired from that new enterprise, and confined himself within his ministerial sphere. He was not tempted to embark in Bible-printing by the large returns expected for the money pressed, free from consuming cares, and elastic in all its energies. If a regard for the feelings of such parties as were variously concerned did not restrain us, we might, by a plain statement of facts, show how nobly he stood the trial of having heavy penalties exacted for his pure benevolence. The capital which thus suffered from inroads before it was now devoted to the cause of free and cheap Bible-printing, had been bequeathed by an English gentleman in grateful acknowledgment of the Doctor's kindness to him and his family. For several years, in the early period of their married life, Dr. and Mrs. T. took young boarders into their family, to be educated—along with their own children—by a tutor. All who had thus lived in the manse looked back with gratitude to the term as the happiest, and the most orderly and profitable in their life.

invested, since these were expressly restricted to a moderate rate of interest ; and whenever this rate began to rise, provision had been made for its immediate fall by the further cheapening of the Bible, so that all profits that exceeded that moderate rate should be scrupulously devoted to the fresh reduction of Bible prices ; but his one motive—and it had the force of a passion sanctioned by conscience—was zeal for securing without delay the greatest possible cheapness for the Word of God. There was much in the policy and bearing of the English monopolists to justify the apprehension that, unless a vigorous and comprehensive competition were started and maintained in Scotland, they would rule, if they did not even exclusively occupy, the market, and might soon show that, instead of advancing to make new reductions in Bible prices, they drew back from their late reductions, as having been alike compulsory and for a temporary purpose. They had no liking for the novelty of a cheap Bible ; for, apart from their experience of how much it had lessened their enormous profits, they alleged that if it were made cheaper, it would be ‘bought by the infidel or socialist for waste-paper purposes,’ and sink into general contempt ; forgetting that the Bible’s peculiar value and dignity remain unaffected whether it be sold for a ‘mite’ or a ‘king’s ransom,’ and that no profane tearing or mutilation of the Word of Life into fragments of leaves can ever reduce it to ‘waste-paper,’ or cause it to ‘return void,’ or destroy the divine influence which has in innumerable cases rendered some soiled and trampled piece of a page, containing scarcely a legible sentence or clause, effectual in arousing and converting the hardened sinner and scoffer, or in giving solace and peace to the victim of an otherwise cureless sorrow, and of despair itself. Might not the monopolists, when undisturbed by close competition, hasten to undo the ‘disgrace’ of cheap Bibles, and to bring back the *respectably* priced copies, though the latter, if too dear and rare to be used by infidels for ‘waste-paper purposes,’ may again, as

of old, be frequently entrusted to the keeping of pawnbrokers—a fate scarcely less profane than the other? In the circumstances, and with the contingencies, it should not be matter of surprise that Dr. Thomson's zeal in the cause with which he had been so closely identified, led him to embark in the formation and maintenance of the Free Bible Press Company. He might, indeed, have decided more prudently and safely for his own worldly interests by resolving to stand aloof, and leave Bible-printing in the hands of the patentees, checked only by the undeveloped, desultory, and timid energies of that Scottish competition which was yet in its infancy; but the rapid progress of Bible circulation through the reduction of prices would then have been arrested. Let those who are disposed to expatiate severely upon the zealous veteran's imprudent hazarding of his pecuniary means, proceed to calculate fairly what would have been the result of a safer and less unselfish policy on his part to the cause of cheap Bibles and their extended circulation, and what they cannot admire they will feel an equal difficulty in condemning; and as they remember how deeply he suffered for his disinterested interference with Bible-printing, they will easily forgive it.

Nor should it be forgotten that on his unselfish zeal there might not have rested a shadow of imprudence, but it might have been justified by a glorious success, if he had not encountered the most unscrupulous and formidable opposition from quarters whence it was least to be anticipated. We do not wonder at the monopolists doing their utmost to frustrate his aims, and, in revenge for his terrible curtailing of their old spoils, to plot the accomplishment of his ruin, and that of the Coldstream Free Bible Press. But was it not 'passing strange' that the British and Foreign Bible Society should league itself *with* the men who for generations had made booty of a full half of its funds, and given it only a small half of the number of Bibles it ought to have got for annual distribution, and

should also league itself *against* the very man who had enabled it to more than double its stock of Bibles, and who, according to the confession of the Bible Society's own secretary, Mr. Brandram, 'had the satisfaction that all admitted that *he* had been mainly instrumental in producing that lowering of the price of the Bible which is so intimately connected with the present extraordinary demand for the sacred volume.' In the face of such opposition (which does not need to be characterized here in detail), the support given to the Free Bible Press by the professed friends of cheap Bible circulation was, even in Scotland, rather lukewarm, inconsistent, and desultory,—neither the kind nor the degree of support which such a cause, struggling against 'a sea of troubles,' might have received from many in the north who had strongly denounced a Bible monopoly. In purchasing Bibles, frequently no care was taken by these friends to ascertain whether they came from a monopolist press or from the free press, though the productions of the latter were in no respect inferior, and were at a lower price; and thus the Bibles of the monopolists met with a considerable sale in Scotland even among Dissenters. Unfortunately, for several years after the abolition of the Scotch patent, and during the career both of the 'Scottish Board for Bible Circulation' and the 'Free Bible Press,' there was in the Liberal newspaper press of Scotland a continual 'dropping' of paragraphs in eulogy of free and cheap Bibles and the schemes for producing them, instead of a series of such powerful articles as Dr. Campbell had contributed to the *London Patriot*; yet the *Scotsman* could have borne away the palm on the Bible monopoly as easily as it did, even from London contemporaries, on the question of the corn monopoly.

The Free Bible Press Company was wholly distinct from the Scottish Board for Bible Circulation, though Dr. Thomson acted as secretary to both. The Board was not pledged to take its Bibles from the Company any longer than the latter supplied

specimens of the best quality, and at the cheapest rate. Soon, indeed, the Board was dissolved, for the satisfactory reasons assigned in the following ‘resolutions,’ which were, on the occasion, unanimously adopted by the members, and forthwith published:—

‘1. That the object for which the Board was instituted has been accomplished, in the reduction of the price of the Bible to an extent far beyond the most sanguine expectation of the Board at its institution. 2. That the formation of the Free Bible Press Company in Coldstream, for the purpose of carrying on the printing and binding departments on the footing stated in the secretary’s communication to the Board, affords a guarantee for securing the carrying out the great object of producing the Holy Scriptures at the cheapest possible rate. 3. That the Board be therefore dissolved, its functions having ceased with the accomplishment of the purpose of its institution. 4. That the meeting cannot separate without recording the expressions of their devout gratitude to God for the success with which He has crowned the efforts of the Board, in securing for the public the full benefit of the abolition of the monopoly. 5. That the warmest thanks of the Board are due to the Rev. Dr. Thomson, their able and zealous secretary. With him the scheme originated, and by him it has been conducted to its triumphant result. To his penetration, energy, perseverance, and excellent management (so far as regards human instrumentality) the whole success is to be ascribed.

‘W. WEMYSS, *Chairman*.¹

‘EDINBURGH, 16th Jan. 1845.’

¹ In a report issued by the Scottish Board, 10th January 1843, and signed by William Wemyss, *Dep.-Com.-Gen.*, as chairman, there is the following statement: ‘The Board’s principal difficulty all along has been the want of funds for accomplishing successfully the great object which it has in view—the multiplication and diffusion of Bibles at the cheapest possible rate, and without profit to any one but for labour actually bestowed. *Indeed, any funds with which it has been supplied have been provided for chiefly by the secretary (Dr. Thomson), at a very great inconvenience to him-*

Dr. Thomson had given buildings at Coldstream, which were his own property, for the accommodation of the Bible-binding department lately associated with the Scottish Board ; and these and the adjoining premises, also belonging to him, were taken for the Free Bible Press. The site was within the precincts of the old Abbey ; and the former associations of priest-craft flourishing upon the ignorance and superstition which it constantly fostered, and denouncing fearful plagues and woes against the monarch who permitted an English Bible to enter and circulate through his dominions, would contrast with the new associations of a devoted servant of Jesus Christ zealously engaged in an enterprise for daily producing thousands of Bibles, to be disseminated at the cheapest rate over all the country and its distant dependencies ! The two spectacles which have been exhibited within that small area on the Scottish bank of the Tweed at Coldstream, vividly represent two eras, utterly unlike each other in their religious aspects. The Abbey of the sixteenth century was exclusively a 'religious establishment,' fully equipped with holy men to guide the souls and lives of rich and poor around them, and endowed with great wealth and influence ; yet history has disclosed what such establishments were when on the eve of being sup-

self.' The entire amount of the funds subscribed to the Board from first to last was only £504, 1s. 9d. ; and of this amount 'several sums, though subscribed and acknowledged, were never paid ; while, of the amount actually received, a considerable portion was returned in Bibles, as required by the subscribers. The remainder was applied to defray the expenses necessarily incurred in travelling, in holding public meetings in many of the principal towns, in printing, postages, advertising, etc.' With such small efforts on the part of the *subscribing* public, the Scottish Board achieved results truly marvellous, not only in itself producing large issues of unprecedentedly cheap Bibles, but in compelling the mighty monopolists to reduce their prices to a mere *third* of what these had formerly been, and in bringing about such a demand for, and such a circulation of, Holy Scripture as had no parallel. Verily, the public never paid so little for such immense and lasting benefits as were secured through the operations of the Board. The public 'reaped' abundantly, after 'sowing' very sparingly.

pressed—the centres of ignorance and immorality. In the middle of the nineteenth century the same site in Coldstream was occupied by a printing-office ; but the lay labourers shed abroad far and near the saving and purifying light of that divine Word which the monks rejected for themselves, and forbade to others. A few years of the Bible Press at Coldstream would do more for human progress than centuries of Abbey effort there.

Doubtless, Dr. Thomson's love for the Border town had prompted him to give it the honour and the benefit of being the place whence the unfettered Bible should go forth over all the country, and to the ends of the earth, in unexampled cheapness ; and this preference, though springing from mere sentiment, was not reversed by his calm judgment, or by any commercial considerations. Edinburgh might, for some reasons, have seemed to be a fitter locality for such an establishment, but Coldstream was not without its compensating advantages. A spacious printing-office soon arose, and was furnished with the best machinery for carrying on a large business ; and cheering orders for Coldstream Bibles came in daily from many quarters. In 1844 the Doctor, at a public dinner given to him by his fellow-townsmen belonging to all religious denominations, mentioned that, during the 'month' which was passing, the establishment had sent 32,000 Bibles to London, and relatively larger numbers to Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dublin. He spoke of the persons connected with the several working departments as 'upwards of a hundred,' and expected that 'in a few months these would be increased to between two and three hundred.' He had no small satisfaction in opening up within his native town such a new and profitable sphere of labour ; and he saw with pleasure, in the formerly deserted streets, many groups hurrying along, at the summons of the Free Press bell rung out at morn and mid-day ; but his chief delight was in the stock of cheap Bibles which they produced,

and which were thence sent daily abroad through the world to reach the poorest. The friends who may have met him taking his early walk to the office, or who may have there watched him as he beheld the sheets rapidly thrown off, or large packages of Bibles made up, or who may have sat at his breakfast table, and seen him glance into each of the many letters and 'orders' that had just been brought by the post, could not fail to mark how his face shone with an absorbing excitement.

His son-in-law, Mr. Green, joined the Company, adding about £5000 to the capital; and several shares, all comparatively small, were taken by persons in various districts of Scotland, who desired to promote the cause of Bible reduction and circulation. These shareholders knew that a moderate interest for their investments was all they had to expect, since, according to a fundamental and permanent condition, in which they had acquiesced, and which the Doctor was sure to see duly enforced, any excess above that moderate interest, instead of being appropriated to their profits, would be at once devoted to a new cheapening of the Scriptures. They must also have been aware—quite as fully as Dr. Thomson himself—of the opposition which would be offered by the monopolists, and which might be rendered overwhelming by the peculiar policy of the Bible Society; and few of them, it is more than probable, had either his impetuous zeal, or his sanguine temperament, to lead them to undervalue or to overlook the injurious, if not fatal, effects which that opposition might have upon the success of the Free Bible Press. They were more likely than he to be visited with misgivings lest such hostility should not only interfere with the small return expected from their capital, but also endanger the capital itself. They had been onlookers of the movement for cheap Bible circulation, and might have calculated more coolly than the leader, who had for years been absorbingly engaged in it, what the forces of resistance would be, and would do. On this ground, quite apart from the fact

that, for himself and his family, he had more money at stake than had the shareholders collectively, all the warnings and cautions should have come from them to him, rather than from him to them. They were not under the fascination of his zeal, which impaired prudence and vigilance ; yet they required from him greater vigilance and prudence than they themselves possessed, and for their interests as well as his own ! Certainly, it was not reasonable that when, through the pressure of resolute hostility from quarters whence something widely different might have been looked for, the Free Bible Press was involved in failure and disaster, any shareholders should fix upon him responsibility or blame for *their* losses, and aggravate the heavy burden of his own losses by the addition of theirs. He indeed (as we shall see) felt keenly for the shareholders, and laboured for their relief ; but what they had done had been with the view of advancing the cause of cheap Bible circulation, and not of serving or aggrandizing its enthusiastic champion. They had exposed themselves to risk with their eyes more deliberately open to it than were his eyes to any risk—either his own or that of others ; and when the crash of misfortune came, it was hard that his want of foresight, not theirs, should have to bear whatever censure was passed, and that amidst his suffering from the loss of his ‘earthly all,’ which was contemporaneous with the incalculable gain received by the Bible-buying public from his persevering labours, the losses of the group of shareholders that had staked much less, and that otherwise had undergone no toil in the Bible enterprise, should be represented as his *personal debts*. Had the Free Bible Press continued to flourish, neither the moderate interest of the shares, nor the shares themselves, would have been set down to Dr. Thomson’s account ; and why, even in imagination, and on moral grounds, should the losses have become claims upon *him* ?

For a time, however, the Free Bible Press was eminently successful, sending forth large supplies of the cheapest Bibles,

and receiving congratulations and thanks, along with fresh 'orders,' from far and near. Unprecedentedly low as the prices of the various editions of Bibles and Testaments printed at Coldstream had been fixed, it was found at the close of a year after the establishment was in full operation, that they yielded much more than the anticipated interest for capital, and consequently the primary rule against large profits came into play, and a new reduction of prices was agreed upon, though perhaps the surplus might wisely have been held in hand to form a reserve fund for repairing the 'wear and tear' of printing materials. Probably, too, the coming persecution might have been better prepared for and resisted if fewer editions of Scripture had been issued by the new press; so that a very considerable portion of the capital would have been retained to form 'sinews of "defensive" war' in the future. But the wish was strong to have a full assortment of cheap editions, in order that the public might at once get the full benefit of free printing, and see how heavily the monopoly had taxed all the editions. The new establishment furnished all the editions that were in frequent demand; and thus Bibles, which had neither a fetter nor a tax, were offered to all classes. This competition, had it been but fairly encountered, would have kept its ground all the more securely on account of its various editions.

We learn from the Government Board of Bible Supervision for Scotland, that 'from January 1844 to January 1845, sixteen editions of the Bible were published in Scotland, consisting of 200,000 copies,' and that, 'from January 1845 to January 1846, there were twenty-one editions, numbering 312,000 copies; from January 1846 to May of the same year, five editions, consisting of upwards of 47,000 copies, have been published.' In reference to these facts and figures, reported by the Rev. Dr. Robertson, then Secretary of Her Majesty's Board, Dr. Thomson states, that 'although the present number of the machines and presses of the Coldstream Free Bible Press Company, till

long after January 1845, was not completed by about one half, yet the copies printed at Coldstream from that period till January 1846 exceeded by 44,400 the number of the copies printed by *all other parties* [including the *ex-monopolists*, Blair and Bruce] throughout Scotland; and of the 47,000 copies published in the first four months of 1846, 30,450 were printed at Coldstream,' so that only 16,550 were printed elsewhere. In 1845 no fewer than 178,200 Bibles were printed at Coldstream; and this number exceeded by 23,780 the entire stock of Bibles that had been produced in 1832 in ENGLAND by the Queen's Printers and the two privileged Universities, whilst it far more than doubled the number that had been printed in *Scotland* during 1832!

The reduction in price, that caused this immense increase in the number of Bibles printed, was notable. We do not here go back to the shamefully exorbitant prices which made Bibles very scarce, and which had been strictly maintained down to the overthrow of the Scotch monopoly in 1839, though those prices should never be forgotten when the monopoly is thought of, or when Dr. Thomson's work in overthrowing it, and in advancing 'from strength to strength' of cheapness, is gratefully mentioned. The Government Board reported that, on the withdrawal of their patent, *Blair and Bruce* charged about a half less for their Bibles, reducing £1, 11s. 3d. to 11s.; 8s. 3d. to 4s. 4d.; 2s. 1d. to 1s.; and 2s. 3d. to 9½d.¹ But instead of now going back to the monopoly prices, we shall keep within the era of cheap Bibles, and notice Dr. Thomson introducing the *cheaper* and the *cheapest*.

The following statement by Dr. Thomson shows us the starting-point of cheapness in 1841, assumed, amid general

¹ The Government Board calculates, that on the *ascertained* sale of the last two Bibles alone for two years, there was a saving of £28,736 for the public! The reduction cost the ex-monopolists an *annual* difference of £14,368 on *two* Bibles; yet some folks have doubted if the Scotch patent yielded £10,000 a year from ALL its Bibles!

congratulations, by the Bible Society, and the goal of far greater cheapness reached by the Free Bible Press. Of course the Free Bible Press was not so far in advance in 1841, nor was the Bible Society in 1846 so far behind; still the Coldstream Company had been the pioneer along the stages of reduction. After the Scottish monopoly had been abolished for about two years, and after the author of *Jethro* had aroused England as to the practicability and necessity of securing yet cheaper Bible circulation, a very great reduction did take place. The Committee of the Bible Society in particular were lauded for their benevolence in publishing a catalogue of prices which astonished all, and filled the hearts of their pious supporters with exultation; nor was it thought possible that cheap Bible circulation 'could ever further go.' 'But let us compare some of the cheapest in that catalogue with the prices now (1845) charged by the Free Bible Press Company:—

BIBLE SOCIETY'S LAST PRICES.

PEARL BIBLE, 24mo.

	s.	d.
Coloured calf, and lettered,	4	0
Plain calf,	3	7
Sheep,	3	0

RUBY BIBLE.

Coloured calf, and lettered,	4	0
Plain calf,	3	1
Sheep,	2	6

NONPAREIL BIBLE, 12mo.

Coloured calf, and lettered, *	3	9
Plain calf,	2	9
Sheep,	2	6

SMALL PICA BIBLE, 8vo.

Coloured calf, and lettered,	8	4
Plain calf,	7	3
Sheep,	6	3

FREE BIBLE PRESS PRICES.

[The Free Bible Press prefers *morocco* binding to calf on these books; and while better, it certainly is not cheaper.]

PEARL BIBLE, 24mo.

	s.	d.
Morocco, tooled,	2	0
Plain morocco,	1	9
Sheep,	0	8½

RUBY BIBLE.

Morocco, tooled,	2	9
Plain morocco,	2	6
Sheep,	1	6

NONPAREIL BIBLE, 12mo.

Coloured calf, and lettered,	2	5
Plain calf,	2	2
Sheep,	1	1½

SMALL PICA BIBLE, 8vo.

Coloured calf, and lettered,	5	4
Plain calf,	4	10
Sheep,	3	10

‘It is true,’ adds the Doctor, ‘that when the above catalogue [of the Bible Society] appeared, others were issued from time to time at a still lower figure ; but that never happened till the monopolists were forced further down by the Free Bible Press ;’ and we have quoted the contrasted catalogues because, though not strictly contemporary, but divided from each other by two or three years, they show both the great stride in reduction, and the party that made it. The ex-monopolists in Scotland invariably stepped forward after the Border pioneer had moved a stage ; but ‘as if,’ according to the Doctor’s playful suggestion, ‘their former privilege entitled them to some superiority still,’ they came to a stop when they were several paces behind, and fixed upon higher prices. Thus, at the time when the Coldstream 24mo pocket Bible was 6½d., the ex-royal printers charged for their copy 9½d. ; and when the Coldstream 8vo small pica Bible for the aged was 3s. 4d., the Blair and Bruce specimen of the same was 5s. 3d. ; and a proportionately dignified distance from the cheapness of the various Coldstream editions was maintained by the ex-monopolists in fixing all the other prices on their contemporary list of Bibles.

The remarkable impulse given to Bible circulation by the sweeping and persevering reduction of prices cannot be fully appreciated if we keep within the sphere of Scotland, and do not extend our view into England, to mark the prodigious progress made there by the great cause, even under the continuance of an English monopoly. The holders of this monopoly have indeed only succeeded in retaining it since 1840 by stooping to forego exorbitant profits, and to ask free-trade prices. Much more would have been achieved if Bible printing had become free in the South as in the North ; still the three ‘firms’ that got the patent, with the view of making Bibles high-priced in England for their aggrandizement, had been constrained to issue Bibles at free-trade cheapness ; and thus, though the *brand* of the English patent remained on the Bible, the *fetters*

of that patent, which wickedly hindered Bible circulation, had been almost wholly struck off. It may be doubted whether Scotland ever before put forth such a mighty and blessed influence upon England as in this Bible-printing episode ; certainly the North never otherwise exerted such wide and lasting power over the religious destinies of the South. No sooner had the Scottish monopoly fallen, and the Scottish Board been organized, than Bible circulation in England advanced at an unprecedented rate, and many hundreds of thousands of the poor that had been without copies, came into possession of the treasure. For nearly ten years before the Scotch patent ceased, the annual issue of the Bible Society had ranged from 500,000 to 600,000, but in the first year after the abolition it rose to 776,360 ; and, rapidly mounting higher, it reached in 1846 the splendid number of 1,441,651. In this year the Society circulated, at *home alone*, the immense proportion of 1,104,787 Bibles—a boon of incalculable value derived by England from her poor yet enterprising neighbour, Scotland. What host of missionaries sent by the Presbyterian North would have been equivalent to this magnificent array of Bibles launched in a single year, and afterwards annually reinforced by similar numbers ? In the eleven years that immediately preceded the overthrow of the Scottish monopoly, the issues of the Bible Society amounted to 5,727,150 ; but in the eleven that immediately succeeded that overthrow, they amounted to 11,563,792. These issues being chiefly of two of the cheapest specimens of Bibles, on which the reduction of prices had been respectively 4s. 2d. and 2s. 7d. each copy, the saving effected during the latter eleven years has been reasonably calculated to amount to *two millions sterling* ! Nor should it be forgotten that in England there were other extensive agencies besides the Bible Society for the circulation of the Scriptures, and that they, too, received a mighty impulse from the events and movements in Scotland.

Yet, though Dr. Thomson had done more than any other man to bring about this prodigious increase in the circulation, and equally prodigious reduction in the price, of Bibles in England, not a single copy printed at Coldstream was allowed to be in that vast supply for England ; nor would the Bible Society permit a Free Bible Press copy to enter the stock sent to Ireland or the colonies, where the English patent had no force. Through the too early cessation of the stir and war in England against the monopoly, the great market of the South was never open to the Scotch Bibles. When the English Dissenters were being roused to such a perception of and indignation against the outrageous injustice and mischief of the monopoly, as would have moved them not only to labour for its speedy overthrow, but in the meantime to disregard the restrictions which it imposed, and to order Scotch Bibles for their use, suddenly the agitation ceased, for the monopolists lowered their prices to the Scottish level, and the English Dissenters were forthwith contented with the Bibles which had become cheap, though not a whit more free. They were henceforth indisposed to take any trouble or run any risk in what might be called the *smuggling* of Scotch Bibles across the Borders. But had the agitation gone on, and Dr. Campbell continued to sustain and guide it, not a few would have demanded the concession of unconditional free printing, whilst many would have taken up the position, that it is wholly *unconstitutional* for an English monarch to assume the prerogative of restricting the circulation of God's Word, addressed to mankind, and that he has no more right to interdict all but one or two individuals from printing it, than he would have to interdict these also, and decree that in the British empire the Bible should be an *unprinted* book. In either case Christian subjects are warranted to resist the usurpation, and to follow the apostolic precept and example in 'obeying God rather than man.'

The sovereign is the acknowledged 'head' of the Church of England ; and in this capacity the Queen might, perhaps constitutionally, grant a patent authorizing certain persons alone to print *all the Bibles that were to be used, publicly or privately, within that Church* ; but she neither claims nor is admitted to be the 'head' of Dissenting denominations, and has as little to do with the printing of *their* Bibles as with the election of their pastors and deacons, the fixing of their doctrinal creed, or the devising and administration of their ecclesiastical polity. The friends of free Bible printing in Scotland were anxious to see it fairly tried in the high law courts of England, whether English Dissenters could be *constitutionally* interdicted from having Bibles which the royal patentee had not printed ; and they were sanguine that the decision would have been in conformity with an old judgment of the Irish Bench, and would have shown that a Bible monopoly in England is only co-extensive with the State Church of England, and that in the free Churches of English Dissent, free Bible *printing* is not less tolerated than free Bible *preaching*. English Dissenters could then have ordered the free Bibles of Scotland ; and thus a most important market would have been opened to the issues of the Coldstream Free Bible Press. But the English Dissenters abandoned the fight against monopoly before this point was tried and settled ; and they fell back into contentment with the patentees' Bibles, merely because these were cheap, though they completely excluded the free and still cheaper editions printed in the North. Had the Nonconformists of England persisted in the bold policy which, towards the close of 1840, they, under Dr. Campbell's guidance, seemed bent on pursuing, they would soon have either ascertained that the Queen's Printers could not prevent any but those belonging to the Queen's Church from buying Scotch Bibles, or have resolved that those printers' exclusive rights to deal out the Bible to Englishmen of all religious denominations, as well as to those

who were Churchmen, should be swept away after the example given in Scotland; and in either case a very large market would have been opened in the South for the Coldstream Bibles. The many public meetings in England, on seeing the Free Press specimen sheets which Dr. Thomson offered, were filled with enthusiasm, and their pledge of ordering Bibles from Scotland would have been more than redeemed, if discussion had gone on to enlighten the popular understanding, and to nerve the popular will.

If the closing of the English market was a serious disadvantage for the Free Bible Press, the proceedings of the Bible Society were far more injurious, and gave 'the unkindest cut of all' to the champion of free and cheap Bibles. We allude to those proceedings with extreme reluctance, and the utmost brevity. For more than a generation Dr. Thomson had been a zealous advocate of the Society; and certainly, during the period when he laboured for free and cheap Bibles, he did more to promote its designs and multiply its efficiency than any other man, whether patron or office-bearer. At the very time when he felt constrained to censure some points of its administration, he was enabling it to distribute *double* its former number of Bibles; and this was the greatest of services. But how did the Society regard his labours? Another question first occurs: How did the Society regard the monopoly? Was it not undeniably the greatest and the most unjustifiable obstacle in the way of Bible circulation—the chief reason for Bibles remaining dear and scarce? It stood right across the Society's generous course, exacting double price for every Bible. Could the Society fail to seek the immediate and entire removal of this monopoly, which had no such connection either with political or with ecclesiastical parties as should forbid that Society to take action against it? There were no restraints, from the Society's constitution, keeping it from doing its utmost to overthrow the outrageous device for making

Bibles dear and scarce ; on the contrary, the Society should have been the earliest and the most energetic in assault. Even though the spoils of the patent had gone to the Crown itself, the Bible Society should have stepped forward to petition that 'Cæsar's tribute' should be exacted from anything rather than from God's Book for mankind ; but when the spoils went merely to one or two private individuals, acting as gentlemen tradesmen, and promoted no national or party interest, the course of the Society was open, and had nothing formidable. That course was admirably explained, not only by Dr. Campbell, but by Mr. Joseph Hume, M.P., to whom the London Committee had assigned as a reason for the Society not petitioning against the English monopoly, that they could not do so 'without giving offence to some of their supporters and friends.' The 'fear of man bringeth a snare,' and leads societies, like men, away from the path of duty. The directors might have given 'offence' to some personal friends of the monopolists ; but has not their neutrality, or rather their ill-disguised partisanship of the royal printers, given deeper offence to a far larger class of 'supporters and friends' that sympathized with the cause of unfettered Bible-printing ? The patentees had good reasons for loving the Society that had so long enriched them ; but why the Society should cling so fondly to the patentees, and not with the view or even the wish of recovering the spoils, but apparently for the pleasure of being still further fleeced and shorn, is passing strange, and not to be explained by the fact that the funds, lost and being lost so pleasantly, were placed by the public in the hands of 'stewards.' So late as 1860, a representative from the management of the Bible Society, uninstructed by all that had occurred during the preceding twenty years in Scotland to demonstrate that free trade was the best promoter both of accuracy and cheapness, had the audacity to stand almost alone in testifying, before a Parliamentary committee, in favour of the continuance of the Bible

monopoly, with—as Dr. Campbell, with pithy alliteration, described—‘its uncontrolled power of *blundering* and *plundering*!’ The directors persisted in buying from the monopolists dear Bibles for distribution in Ireland and the colonies (where the tyranny of the English patent did not extend), though Dr. Thomson offered to supply them at far lower prices. But this was only a small and the most defensible part of their procedure in the matter; for, after buying dear Bibles, they, in those quarters where the cheap Bibles from Scotland were circulating and were being gladly purchased, reduced their dear Bibles far beneath the prices of the Scotch ones, and thus undersold and drove the latter from the market, the large funds, contributed for a very different purpose by the public, enabling them to go through this discreditable business easily, as indeed those funds would have enabled them to pay a pound for each Bible to uphold the monopolists, and then to sell it for a penny with the view of overthrowing the Free Bible Press, and ruining Dr. Thomson. They were allowed to act thus without any general censure, under the cloak that they had formerly, once or twice, in wholly different circumstances, done something similar. When all Bibles were exorbitantly high-priced, and when there were monopolists in Scotland as well as in England to demand and exact whatever they pleased, and to cause a famine of the Word of Life in the land, the directors of the Bible Society came once or twice to the resolution of employing a portion of their funds in offering, for a few months, some editions of the high-priced Scriptures, at a greatly reduced price, to the poor and to Sunday scholars. They did not make such great reductions as free trade subsequently effected; yet the reductions entailed such a sacrifice of funds, that they could neither be long-continued nor often repeated, and they put many thousands of families into their first possession of the Scriptures. This exceptional policy must have been eminently acceptable to the monopolists. It brought

an unprecedentedly large 'order,' yet paid their old exorbitant prices ; and if many poor families then got Bibles for the first time, the monopolists added several thousands sterling of *new* profits to the annual sum extorted by their 'turnpike on the way of salvation.' Even in those circumstances, the directors would have deserved a far higher commendation, if, instead of this costly expedient for making Bibles cheap for a few months to the poor, they had followed the dictate of plain duty, and proceeded to achieve the abolition of the Bible monopoly, and to establish permanent cheapness, so that they might buy cheap Bibles, and sell them without wasting their funds, or turning the poor into paupers. Still, the directors had *then* an excuse for buying Bibles very dear, and for selling them (to the poor) very cheap, which they could not plead after the abolition of the Scotch monopoly, and after the introduction of Bibles that were so cheap as to be, for the whole public, beneath the reduced prices at which the Society had once or twice, for a few months, offered them to the poorest, with a great loss to its own funds. Yet, shortly after the abolition of the Scotch monopoly, and just as Dr. Thomson was preparing to issue some editions of marvellous cheapness, the directors sold a particular Bible, for which they were paying half-a-crown, at the reduced price of 1s. 6d., and made a similar reduction on a particular Testament ; but as, at the end of half a year, they found that they had lost £14,000 [a handsome gift to the patentees !] on their sales of that Bible and Testament, they cancelled the arrangement. We adduce this case, not so much with the view of fixing upon it any suspicion of a design, sagaciously planned as to date, to damage the forthcoming Scotch Bibles, and to support the interests of the English monopoly ; we adduce it rather with the aim of enabling us to judge of some of their *subsequent* proceedings in the same line. Might it not have been fairly inferred, that after that particular Bible and others had been brought by free printing down to and

much beneath *eighteenpence*, the directors of the Bible Society would have felt themselves interdicted from again sacrificing the Society's funds, and incurring great loss by selling at prices far beneath what they had just paid to the monopolists, in order that they might undersell and exclude from the market the cheap Scotch Bibles? At the time when the Society discontinued selling Bibles at eighteenpence, and incurring a shilling's loss per copy, Dr. Thomson could have enabled it to resume the eighteenpence issue without any loss; but the Society would not consent, as if it were better that the poor should lack Bibles than be supplied through free printing. When Bibles came to be offered to the public at a price far beneath eighteenpence—beneath even a shilling—how did the Society think that the poor, whom it had formerly required to pay eighteenpence, could not pay the smaller sum, and that the Society was warranted to sell Bibles beneath the Free Bible Press's prices, though it had paid the monopolists at a rate above these prices? After Bibles had become, in ordinary trade, much cheaper than the low rate fixed by the Society when it half sold and half gave away copies to the poor, there was no call upon that Society to sacrifice its funds by selling far beneath prime cost to the poor, on whom it placed the stigma of pauperism; and certainly the proceeding did not assume a more necessary or legitimate character, when its tendency, if not its aim, was to undersell and ruin the Free Bible Press and its venerable projector, who had rendered the most distinguished service to the cause of Bible circulation, and to the Society itself, and to give favour and victory to the very men who, for more than a generation, had aggrandized themselves by imposing such a tax on the Word of God as made it inaccessible to the million. We cannot wonder that not a few observers, grieved and indignant at the Bible Society's partisanship for the monopolists, who deserved no sympathy or help, and at the injury which the Society inflicted upon an enter-

prise and a man that had conferred upon it as many powers of usefulness as those monopolists had formerly taken away, should conclude that this Society had better withdraw from its equivocal work in the *home distribution* of Bibles, and devote all its funds to their dissemination *abroad*. As for the home field, the various evangelical Churches, the home mission agencies, and a host of benevolent neighbours might easily undertake, in the era of wonderfully cheap Bibles, to provide that every man, woman, and child in the country should possess a copy of the 'oracles of God.'

The details of the *underselling* process, carried on to exclude from the market the Coldstream Bibles wherever these had gained an entrance and a welcome, would be many and striking ; but the period during which a full exposure might have done much good has passed by several years ago, and the veteran whose closing term of life was burdened and embittered with the most cruel anxieties and disappointments, has had his release. The Coldstream press issued Bibles at much cheaper prices than had ever been asked, still the prices were such as Bibles could be produced for ; but the rival prices of the underselling agency were neither what had been paid for the Bibles, nor what the production of the Bibles had cost ; they were even far below the rate at which any Bibles could be produced. The consequence was, that Bibles amounting to the value of £10,000 were left on the hands of the Free Bible Press Company as unsaleable ; and this to a Company with but small capital, and needing quick sales to yield the extremely moderate profits that had been agreed upon, was a perilous condition.

Less for his own sake than for that of the shareholders, and especially that of the great cause of cheap Bible circulation, he made several appeals, in which he plainly pointed out the agencies, influences, and circumstances that had brought on a crisis which endangered the existence of the Free Bible Press,

though, as he showed, nothing had prevented the public at large from reaping the full benefits of his scheme. The public had got the earliest and widest advantages of free Bible printing, however much *he* might be suffering, or have yet to suffer ; and the 'Word of God was not bound,' though he was environed on all sides by perplexities and difficulties. There was a response to those appeals, in the shape of orders from a very considerable number of congregations connected with his own Church, for Bibles from the excessive stock ; but the diminution was not only too slow, but, on the whole, much too slight, though it was kindly meant. It would have given animation to a 'going' business, but failed to move a stationary one. The efforts made by many friends were straggling and desultory, without system and without concentration, though had the latent sympathy for Dr. Thomson and his cause been developed into energetic and organized help, it would have sufficed for his deliverance. The friends of free and cheap Bible circulation had far more than the power needed, if only they had been moved to put it forth simultaneously, and, in circulating the Coldstream Bibles, had shown some of the zeal of the Bible Society in circulating the monopolists' Bibles, and in underselling those of free trade, at a loss to its funds of £14,000 in six months !

Negotiations were also entered into with a practical man of great ability and experience, that he might assume the management of the establishment ; but, after he had all but acceded to the proposal, he drew back.

The overthrow of the Free Bible Press was not to be averted ; and the catastrophe pressed upon Dr. Thomson at all points with a greater complication and weight of disappointment and distress than any other sufferer experienced. He was approaching his seventieth year ; and it was hard that, after the first *decade* of that old age which seeks repose had been engrossed with arduous labours and conflicts, the second *decade*

should be convulsed by overwhelming calamities—the loss of his own and his family's pecuniary means, the frustration of his long and fondly cherished scheme, the blasting of his dearest hopes, and the checking and closing, if not also the undoing, of his most congenial toil. Yet, under such grievous misfortunes, he was neither ashamed nor without sources of purest consolation. In private he had 'the testimony of a good conscience,' and he could, even from the pulpit, look his fellow-men full in the face, conscious that he had done nothing to forfeit either their confidence in his integrity, or their esteem of his peculiarly disinterested zeal, and their gratitude for the arduous and unselfish services which he had rendered to them and the country. He had been stripped of his 'earthly all ;' but it was not when he was recklessly gambling, or sordidly calculating, for a 'fortune,' or even for exorbitant profits ; and he felt, and from the constitution and rules of the Free Bible Press the public knew, that the most moderate interest for his capital was all the possible gain that the most exuberant prosperity for the business would have allowed him. Unlike the monopolists, he had not sought to grow rich on Bible printing ; he had not even aimed at a very small 'competency' from *wonderfully cheap* Bibles, whereas the monopolists had desired and achieved enormous wealth through keeping Bibles shamefully *dear*. Whatever ideas may be formed as to the prudence displayed in the origin or the management of the Coldstream establishment, there cannot be the shadow of an imputation as to its having sordid and money-making designs. The Doctor had also a satisfaction, which no personal misfortune could embitter, in seeing that his schemes had brought about an unprecedented cheapening and dissemination of the Scriptures, and thus produced an incalculable and varied amount of good ; and the strong hopes which he cherished that the cheapening and the circulation would be maintained, and not reversed, and that no monopolists would ever succeed in restoring the old

high prices, have been subsequently fulfilled. The results obtained and yet expected were, as he confessed, 'sufficient to compensate for the anxieties and varied sufferings of many years, and to make him remember his misery "as waters that pass away."'

Nor did the fate of the Free Bible Press harden him against sympathizing as constantly and intensely as ever with the great cause of cheap Bible circulation, in which his enthusiastic activity had been violently arrested and paralysed. His mind was not in the least 'soured,' though pained, by the daily sight of the spacious printing-office now empty, and by the many reminders of his 'occupation gone.' He lost none of his interest in rehearsing and discussing the particulars of the 'ten years' struggle' against monopoly, and in 'fighting his battles o'er again.' With unabated delight and gratitude he viewed the progress which was then being made in cheap Bible printing in Scotland, and hailed the new editions issuing from Edinburgh or Glasgow offices. So completely unchanged were his views, sentiments, and enthusiasm regarding free and cheap Bible circulation, that it was apparent to his friends that if he had again obtained the disposal of his former pecuniary means, he would have devoted these to the once and for ever dear and paramount cause.

For years there had been a strong desire among those clergymen and laymen in Scotland and England who appreciated his pre-eminent services in behalf of that cause, to raise a testimonial. Action was taken, but being under no central guidance, and but small local stimulus, it was long feeble and irregular. A movement that is kept before the public for years by a 'pattering' of notices, every now and then, of desultory efforts here and there, tends to make the public apathetic, if not worse; and when it comes to be urged spiritedly under judicious management, it is found to have been seriously damaged. At length carefully organized and nearly simul-

taneous efforts were put forth in behalf of the 'Thomson Testimonial,' which had 'dragged its slow length along.' Coldstream—the town of his birth, the sphere of his ministry, and the place whence his cheap Bibles had issued—was prompt and zealous; and the Doctor's young colleague in the pastorate, the Rev. P. Mearns, distinguished himself then, as ever afterwards, by the rare cordiality, judgment, ability, and perseverance with which he performed a most onerous amount of generous service to the cause, and by the admirable way in which he carried on an extensive and prolonged correspondence. When about to allude to those friends at a distance who nobly laboured in this matter, we have a peculiar satisfaction in acknowledging that friends at home, and especially his esteemed 'yoke-fellow' in the ministry, set the example, and acquitted themselves most worthily. It may seem invidious to particularize those advocates of Dr. Thomson's claims, who exerted themselves most energetically and effectively; yet, on the other hand, a vague and passing description of a band of unnamed labourers coming forward generously in his behalf, would have an ungrateful aspect. Our space, however, is now exceedingly limited; and our notices, not only of the many that subscribed to the testimonial, and within their private circles recommended it to others, and of the smaller class that more publicly and extensively toiled for it, but also of the smallest class, the staff of leaders, consisting of four or five individuals, that acted the most conspicuous and influential part, must be very brief. In the first class there were not a few distinguished laymen both in England and Scotland, such as members of Parliament, judges (headed by Lords Jeffrey and Murray), and magistrates, who subscribed, and, along with subscribing, sent letters expressive of their high consideration for the Doctor's heroic struggles and sacrifices, and for the great result which these had obtained. Some dignitaries of the English Church joined, admitting that the unprecedented cir-

culatation of the Bible was a glorious work, even though the agent was both a Presbyterian and a Dissenter. But in England the vast majority of those who contributed to the testimonial were Dissenters; whilst in Scotland it was mainly indebted to the United Presbyterian Church, though the other evangelical Churches helped. It was, indeed, pleasant to see his own Church so prominently engaged in the service of appreciation. Mr. M. Makgill Crichton affirmed publicly, that if a *Free Church* minister had done what Dr. Thomson did for the freedom and cheapening of the Bible, the Free Church would have shown, in quite a different style and degree, how such a son should be honoured; but the Free Church, though young, has had unusually great experience in the work of honouring those who had conferred signal benefits and distinction upon her. Perhaps, too, the United Presbyterian Church has a very commendable sensitiveness lest genuine 'Presbyterian parity'—the strict level of brotherhood—should be disturbed by marked distinctions for individuals. Certainly, Dr. Thomson was wholly satisfied with the award of his generous brethren.

In the second class, consisting of those who publicly promoted the testimonial, were found the most eminent of the Nonconformist ministers in London and the English provincial towns. In Edinburgh and Glasgow the leading men of the United Presbyterian Church, associated with their Free Church and Congregationalist brethren, came forward readily to advance the movement; and in country towns and districts the clergymen of his own Church, who had ever been the chief friends and most zealous supporters of his Bible schemes, exerted themselves vigorously. The leaders—those who undertook to address a series of public meetings, not only in the principal towns of the North, but in London and the populous provincial towns of England—were D. M. M. Crichton, Esq., of Rankeillour, the Rev. Dr. John Macfarlane, and the Rev. Dr. William Anderson, of Glasgow—Dr. Wardlaw being

prevented by the state of his health from joining this distinguished band. Mr. Crichton, a Free Church elder, was long prominent in the Non-Intrusion struggle, and subsequently in the advocacy of the position and various schemes of the newly-organized Free Church ; and though occupying no mean place in the counsels and debates of the General Assembly, yet his strong and straightforward eloquence was more effective on the platform of a public meeting. The unsectarian impulses which led him to identify himself with the Thomson Testimonial were most praiseworthy ; nor did he take to it with any abatement of energy or zeal. For several weeks he was incessantly engaged in the cause, travelling great distances by day, and in the evenings addressing assemblies with the most fervid oratory.

Dr. Macfarlane had taken steps for getting up a great and influential meeting in Glasgow, which gave the first decisive impetus to the movement ; and the after progress and success were largely indebted to his energy, sagacity, and peculiar eloquence, of which the matter, style, and manner were exquisitely suited to each other, his speeches being full of power and felicity. A favourite with any cultivated Scottish audience, he was a special favourite in England, long before his ministry was removed from Glasgow to London.

Dr. Anderson was another of the band ; and if all Britain had been searched through for the man whose oratory should do justice to a Bible monopoly, and to the various pretences for establishing and maintaining it, Dr. Anderson would have been unanimously fixed upon for his matchless iconoclastic force. Equally distinguished by his generous sympathies and powers of pathetic appeal, he was qualified to offer a transcendent representation of the claims of the veteran abolitionist.

The Rev. Dr. Jack of Dunbar, a highly esteemed friend of Dr. Thomson's, and a man of admirably balanced intellect and polished eloquence, went also into England to exert himself in

behalf of the testimonial. Several young ministers followed to glean after those reapers. We must not fail to mention a single labourer, the Rev. J. M'Whirter, formerly of Greenwich, who was most indefatigable and successful.

Before and during the movement, Dr. Campbell had stated, in the *British Banner*, that less than £4000 for Scotland, and £6000 for England, could not be expected without impeaching the gratitude of the two kingdoms. He was much too sanguine and exacting. The entire amount raised fell short of a third of that sum. It came, however, with a relieving and refreshing effect to the sorely-tried spirit of the aged minister at Coldstream, who, along with his family, felt deeply grateful to all the promoters of the testimonial. It was, on account of the state of his health, presented to him in his own house by the Rev. Dr. Macfarlane, and Messrs. D. M. M. Crichton and H. D. Dickie, etc. etc., who had been commissioned by the general committee to attend; and the address from the subscribers bore the autograph names of the leading clergymen of various denominations in Scotland, and of many influential laymen.

The losses of the several small shareholders of the Free Bible Press continued to distress the Doctor, who, if the testimonial trustees had not expressly limited his powers, would have divided the funds among his fellow-sufferers. He devised a plan for their relief—the republication of what had been his most useful and popular volume, the profits from which were to be devoted to those shareholders; but somehow, in spite of all his eagerness, the public did not appear to sympathize with the object, and the plan was soon dropped.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CLOSE OF HIS MINISTRY AND HIS LIFE.

[1847-1861.]



WHILST Dr. Thomson engaged largely (as late chapters have shown) in non-ministerial work, his mind was not distracted—far less alienated—from the duties of his pastoral office. His zeal in the former neither encroached upon the time, nor abated the energy, required for the latter; and the explanation is, that having a genuine enthusiasm for both, a change from the one to the other supplied the recreation and the repair of strength that must have been wanted after labour within a single sphere, and thus rendered frequent intervals of rest unnecessary. In such a case the labourer has double the hands, or double the hours, for hard toil; and it is astonishing how much he can then quietly do. Of course a sound condition of health is indispensable to this unintermittent exertion, and Dr. Thomson was highly favoured in this respect; for he had the iron constitution which is seldom found in men of his sanguine temperament, and impulsive, fiery action. Under a strain of toil, mental or physical, he knew little of fatigue, and less of exhaustion; and his recovery from these was not only complete, but almost immediate. To the ministry he continued to give his chief care and energy, preparing for the pulpit with his old absorbing earnestness. If he performed more than ministerial work, it was not by withholding from the latter either time or attention, but by turning to account

the 'leisure' which many professional men regard as less precious than their other hours. Ministers spend it in various ways : some in gardening, some in giving secular education to their children, some as *amateur* mechanics in fashioning various articles, some in light reading, or in vocal or instrumental music, some in walking, or in making promiscuous and non-pastoral calls, and a very few in the sport of angling ; but Dr. Thomson's 'leisure' was only a change of toil, and his 'recreations' were his strenuous efforts in the Bible cause. Nor was he ever in more vigorous health, or in greater exhilaration of spirits, than when his ministerial labours were associated with such peculiar 'recreations.' His habits of early rising and of late sitting gave him a long day.

Though when at home he could fully attend to his ministerial duties, yet frequent and long journeyings in the Bible cause necessarily interfered with the constant superintendence which he had hitherto exercised over his people. He could, indeed, when travelling, prepare his discourses, and often did so with as much satisfaction as in his own study ; but as he was often detained at a distance over the Sabbath, a substitute had to appear in his pulpit. He chiefly then regretted that his visitation of the sick was interrupted. He deliberated on the steps that should be taken to prevent his flock from being injured through this occasional lack of pastoral guidance and solace. Dr. Campbell advised that he should wholly resign his charge, and devote his undivided energies to the paramount claims of the Bible cause, leaving the Coldstream congregation to choose another minister. But Dr. Thomson, whilst he could not abandon the Bible enterprise, was equally unwilling to give up his pastorate, for which he had unabated strength, and for a large share of the duties of which he had sufficient time. After anxious consideration, he decided to ask his congregation to obtain a supply of preachers with the view of electing one who should be his colleague and suc-

cessor in the ministerial office. It had hitherto been unusual in the Secession Church for a minister, when in full possession both of ability to do his pastoral work, and of acceptability in doing it, to resolve on claiming assistance. In general, a minister was advanced in years, and had his strength for service, especially his influence over the young, impaired, before a colleague was proposed; and the proposal came from his people, and not from himself, for he was unconscious of, or painfully unwilling to acknowledge, any necessity for its adoption. In the present case, however, the movement for a colleague was begun by Dr. Thomson himself, and at a time when his powers as well as his popularity were undiminished. But he had exceptional reasons for the singularity of his procedure, and the congregation and the Presbytery acquiesced. The Rev. Peter Mearns was duly chosen to be his colleague and successor; and though, in conformity with the practice of the Secession Church, the Doctor had remained strictly neutral throughout the election, yet he obtained such a fellow-labourer as he desired—one distinguished for ability, industry, judgment, and earnestness, and ever ready to give an affectionate co-operation in every pastoral work. The collegiate relationship—especially when the senior is vigorous enough to take a full share of work and influence—is said to be sometimes marked by jealousy, distrust, and discord. In the mercantile world many partnerships are not only successful, but eminently happy, and all the more so when the partners are equally energetic and prominent; and why should clerical partnerships have any elements of strife and misery? But the relations between Dr. Thomson and Mr. Mearns were from first to last sincerely harmonious; and the two ministers laboured together ‘in the bonds of the gospel,’ and in happy and profitable concord. On the Sabbath after Mr. Mearns’ ordination at Coldstream, the senior pastor ‘introduced’ his young colleague to their flock, discoursing very strikingly on

the text, 'Encourage him.' When he exhorted the people to 'encourage' that colleague, he accepted the obligation as equally strong for himself; and he sought subsequently to 'strengthen his hands and to encourage his heart.'

It had been noticed, for some years before this period, that Dr. Thomson's manner of *delivering* his discourses had lost much of its old rapid vehemence and sustained animation, whilst preserving its impressiveness. It was still able to hold and reward the attention of the earnest, but did not, as formerly, inevitably arrest and guide the attention of all classes. This change was erroneously represented by not a few as resulting from his engagements, labours, and frequent travelings in behalf of the Bible cause, these having extinguished his fiery enthusiasm; whereas the true explanation appears to have been that, after passing the meridian of life, his oratory, like that of almost all impassioned preachers, became calmer and slower, but not less weighty; and his habit of waiting until the moment of delivery for expressions to all his ideas and sentiments, gave his mind such anxious employment as, except on occasions of rare excitement, put a drag upon the rapidity, and reduced the force and fervour of his utterance. The extempore search for words to clothe his premeditated thoughts checked the rush and cooled the ardour of his delivery; but his advancing years had more to do with the arrest upon his former eloquence. This effect of age was not less perceptible in the preaching of his admirable contemporary and friend, Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh; and it may be expected in the speaking of all those men who once had an impassioned and vehement elocution.

At the time of Dr. Thomson's appearing with a colleague in his Presbytery, this Border church court had recently undergone great changes in its membership; and the majority of his aged brethren were succeeded by young strangers. He had lost Mr. Inglis of Greenlaw and Mr. Thomson of Dunse

within a brief interval ; and then Dr. Balmer of Berwick and Mr. M'Lay of Stichel almost on the same day. The few surviving coevals were oppressed with infirmities, and could no longer maintain the old intercourse. He keenly felt the removal of nearly all the neighbours and friends whom he had known so long, and loved so tenderly ; yet when he met with their young successors, he entered into frank and cordial familiarity, and at once with youthful sympathies appreciated any individual talents and culture that rose above the ornaments of a former generation. In Berwick he saw and hailed a grandly special case of new advancement—a case that lifted the whole Church, and not a single Presbytery ; and he rejoiced to find in all the young members not only no sign of degeneracy, but evidences of improvement. There were, however, one or two brethren who were still in the very prime of their years, vigour, and influence. Mr. Inglis of Stockbridge—a man of remarkable powers, both physical and mental, and who displayed a large amount of original thought and of scientific knowledge in his Sabbath ministrations to a small rural congregation—had been a Selkirk student, and belonged to the most select circle of Dr. Thomson's friends ; yet he remained to the last, and even for years after the Doctor's death, in the full possession and exercise of his rare capacities and energies, though he had been repeatedly under the pressure of the severest family affliction, when several sons, distinguished for brilliant talents and acquirements, and preparing under his genial training for the ministry, were cut down in earliest manhood, and the grave received their glorious promise and his fondest hopes. It was under the stimulus of Mr. Inglis' noble preaching that Dr. John Cairns began to aspire to a career of study and evangelic effort. Another—though much younger—clerical brother with whom Dr. Thomson had been long associated, but who had not in 1846 passed the prime either of his days or of his energies, was Mr. Renton of Kelso.

What the Doctor confidently anticipated has been realized; and Mr. Renton's influence and reputation, both in his own province and throughout the whole denomination, have, since that period, been greatly increased. From the facility and vigour, the comprehensiveness and precision with which he discussed important questions bearing upon the interests of his Church, he came to hold a foremost place in the Synod; and even down to the present his action and authority are unimpaired, whilst the wish of his brethren is, that he may long be spared for his peculiar usefulness.

From these and the other members of the Border Presbytery, both new and old, Dr. Thomson was not in the least separated by his labours in the Bible cause. He assisted at neighbouring sacraments as frequently as ever, and embraced the opportunities of meeting and communing with his brethren with the old eagerness. Not the slightest secular tinge was given to his character through his connection with free Bible printing; and he opened the Bible with deeper reverence and gratitude from the thought that it had recently been placed in the hands of many hundreds of thousands who had been without it. He circulated the Word of Life in the devout spirit of one who read it aloud to the ignorant; hence, such an occupation could not jar with his pastoral relations and functions.

On the overthrow of the Coldstream Free Bible Press, he confined himself within the sphere of his ministry, not only with resignation, but with a conviction that there needed to be no vacant hours or unemployed energies. To fall back upon his pastoral labours alone was to find full and satisfying occupation. Whilst formerly he had not shrunk from preaching thrice on Sabbath and frequently through the week, he now felt that on the due preparation of only a single discourse the earnest study of a week might be expended. Both at home and during short visits to his sons or to his sons-in-law, it was pleasant to observe that there was no languor of intellect, or decay of

health, or abatement of lively interest in the movements around him. Not a single symptom that his exuberant vigour was about to be withered in a moment, could be discerned. In his seventieth year, on an evening when reaching Kelso by train from Edinburgh, and learning that the conveyance which should have been waiting to take him to Coldstream had been by mistake sent back some hours before, he did not hesitate to perform the journey of nine miles on foot, though this was a task which from his lameness he had never attempted for more than fifty years ; yet he was not even fatigued.

The new year (of 1851) opened upon him in the possession of the best health and of buoyant cheerfulness in the midst of his family, which had been increased by a visit for the season from some members that now lived in circles of their own at a distance. His two married daughters never 'forgot their father's house,' but vied with their two sisters in giving him the tenderest affection and reverence, and in anticipating all his wants and wishes. The recurrence of the season, and the reunion of the family, led him to unlock his stores of old memories and associations ; and his genial discourse, enlivened by many anecdotes about the scenes and companions of the past, was eagerly listened to. The narrative of the venerable speaker, if we could have reproduced it in his own words, would have enabled readers to imagine how, on the particular evening of its rehearsal, it fascinated the family group, and held us listening long after the exchanges of 'good-night' should have been made. All retired to rest musing on the 'tale' of seventy years, but without a warning as to what the 'morrow' would bring forth ! Before the family-party met in the morning, Dr. Thomson had been struck with paralysis ; and a strangely altered condition of life was henceforth before him, if, indeed, life itself were not to be suddenly ended. It was soon discovered that the nerves of motion in his right side and limbs had been permanently affected ; and as the lameness

which had marked him since boyhood was in his left knee, he was thus disabled in both sides, and rendered incapable of walking without assistance for every step. He was also deprived of the power of writing ; and this seriously aggravated the calamity of enforced rest. To few persons could the change to physical inaction have been greater or more trying ; and for him to have *inert* limbs, even though these were not deprived of sensation, was to suffer death in life. Yet he, as well as his friends, felt gratefully that the heavy blow had been warded off from the most precious organs : the brain, the seat of his best activities, was untouched, and he could still exercise it as much as ever in searching into and adoring the works, ways, and character of God, and in considering what the best interests of mankind required, and how they should be promoted. His speech, too, was unchanged, except for a slight drag on its fluency. In the family circle the grief over this unexpected visitation was associated with alarm lest severer strokes might follow ; but he was soon restored to average health, though he never in the least regained the use of his limbs. Sympathy with his illness was extended far beyond the congregation and Presbytery, and was expressed in many hundreds of letters from England and Scotland. His zeal urged him soon to resume preaching, and to appear frequently in the pulpit, though the exercise was far from safe, and though his colleague invariably showed his readiness to undertake the entire amount of public duty. When staying annually for weeks in the house of his youngest daughter in Cupar or in Kilmarnock, he preached in these towns, and to several congregations in the neighbourhood, with very great energy and acceptance ; and the attentions and reverence which so many of his younger brethren offered were soothing to the aged and infirm minister. We have special satisfaction in recording that the ministers of Fife, belonging to his denomination, treated him with an almost filial regard.

Still, whilst from wide and outer circles there came constant encouragement, it was from the domestic circle around his now contracted and stationary existence, that he received the most precious support and cheer of human sympathy—for no man was ever more blessed in his family. As soon as he was in the new state of helplessness, he was surrounded with a redundancy of such care and service as were not only tenderly solicitous, but wisely considerate. His eldest son, on hearing of his father's seizure with paralysis, expressed what was the feeling of one and all in the family—that it was a 'stroke on the heart,' incomparably more painful than the late family troubles which involved loss of means, etc.; and all strove to lighten the load of his afflictions. The chief help, however, was rendered by Mrs. Thomson, who, after having proved herself all that he could wish or imagine in a wife during the season of youth and happiness, and the long subsequent course of his arduous labours, struggles, and sacrifices, was now daily displaying new gifts and graces, and showing herself, if possible, a still more admirable wife in ministering all the aid and solace which his new helplessness required. Long had she shared, yet greatly multiplied, his felicity; and in the protracted period of his strength she had made this free and available for his many public services. For more than forty years of their wedded life she had been a strict 'keeper at home,' when he was travelling far and often; but after his illness she accompanied him wherever he went, keeping beside him either in an hour's drive, or for a long day's journey, and entrusting his comfort and safety to no care that was less vigilant and affectionate than her own. At home she sat with him in his study far more frequently and continuously than ever before; though his occupation from morning to midnight was *reading*, except when he talked with friends. His conversation then with young brethren abounded in such views of men and things as ranged over sixty or seventy years,

and gave an illustrated epitome of our national history in the nineteenth century;—the ecclesiastical chapters, especially in relation to Scotland, being very full, and the portraits of clergymen being given in hundreds—all of these at a respectful distance from Dr. Lawson, whom he, during his whole life, considered to be both the prince of philosophers among divines, and the prince of divines among philosophers.

Throughout the term of his disability and suffering he was peculiarly patient and contented, as all close observers testified.

In March 1855 his 'jubilee' as a pastor was celebrated by his congregation and Presbytery, and by his fellow-townsmen of all denominations and his clerical brethren from several places at a distance. Such a commemoration has invariably a preponderance of sad elements for the aged minister whom it seeks to honour, and who must have survived almost all his early friends, if not his powers of being useful. Of late, several congregations have given their ministers a *half* jubilee demonstration, in the twenty-fifth year of their pastoral union; and this is a sensible and kindly amendment which deserves to be generally adopted. Had the 'silver wedding' been kept at Coldstream, it would have found Dr. Thomson in the prime of his energies, and before these were girded up to fight any of his great battles; but by delaying until he had entered on the fiftieth year of his ministry, he was under such a load of frailty, that he wished to have the jubilee-celebration omitted altogether.¹

¹ A few years later, Coldstream saw another jubilee service in honour of a minister of the same denomination—the Rev. James Porteous. Seldom has a small town seen two clerical jubilees in connection with the same Church. Not the least surprising peculiarity was, that Mr. Porteous, in the fiftieth year of his ministry, was in the full possession of both mental and physical vigour, and kept discharging all the duties of the pastoral office with unabated ability and acceptance. Nor, though several years have since elapsed, has he yet begun to decline. The entire length of his ministry, however, has not been passed in Coldstream, as he was for several years minister of a large congregation in Jedburgh.

But remonstrances from his brethren and people overcame his unwillingness, and the celebration took place. The Established and the Free Church ministers of Coldstream, as well as his United Presbyterian brethren, took part in it cordially; and they were joined by the leading laymen of all the Churches in the district. His own Presbytery was largely represented; and the Rev. Drs. Robson, Macfarlane, and Jeffrey of Glasgow, and Dr. Jeffrey of Denny, and H. D. Dickie, Esq. (a friend who had been closely connected with him in the Bible enterprise), attended. 'Between sixty and seventy gentlemen' (we quote from the local newspapers' report of the proceedings) 'sat down to dinner at three o'clock, under the presidency of Mr. Robert Tait, Lees Mill, one of Dr. Thomson's elders;' and speeches suitable to the occasion were made. Mr. Goldie, the parish minister, 'expressed the unfeigned respect which, for nearly a quarter of a century, he had entertained for their venerable guest. There was indeed a time [during the *Voluntary* controversy] when a small cloud for a while threw a shadow over their intercourse; but instead of resulting in the tempest of which it is generally the precursor, the breath of Christian charity cast it to the four winds of heaven, and from that day to this he could say for himself, and he was sure also he might say for his venerable friend, feelings of goodwill, mutual respect and friendship, had uniformly existed between them.' The Doctor's brethren of the Presbytery—Dr. Cairns, Messrs. Inglis, Hume, and Mearns—and his brethren from Glasgow, eloquently expressed their esteem and veneration; and he replied in a few deeply affecting words. The congregational soiree succeeded—Mr. Mearns, the junior pastor, acting as chairman. He gave a rapid yet comprehensive and impressive sketch of Dr. Thomson's ministerial life, and a just estimate of his services for Bible circulation. Mr. Inglis (Stockbridge) followed with a vigorous and solemn address. Mr. Robert Henderson, a manager of the congregation, then read

an address to the Doctor from the congregation, accompanied by the present of a purse of sovereigns. From this address, which all the clergymen admired for the force and beauty of its composition, and which Mr. Henderson had been appointed to prepare, we can only give the following paragraph :—

‘ Your pulpit discourses have ever been fraught with pure evangelical sentiment, sound theological views, richly interspersed with apt scriptural quotation, of a most practical and heart-stirring character, and admirably adapted for the conversion of sinners, and the confirmation, edification, and comfort of God’s people. We indeed feel no little pride and satisfaction in being so closely associated with one who has been long distinguished, not only as a faithful, zealous, and indefatigable Christian minister, but also as a popular writer, whose works will long survive their author ; as a powerful advocate of civil and religious liberty ; and more especially as the most prominent instrument, under God, in suppressing the worst and most mischievous of all monopolies—the monopoly of the Word of God. Firmly persuaded “ that all monopolies were bad, and that of all monopolies, that of the Word of God was the most outrageous,” you set about the overthrow of that great evil. Bringing to bear upon the task high talents and indomitable perseverance, you were, although surrounded by many difficulties and much opposition, the honoured instrument in shaking off the fetters by which the Word of God was bound, conferring on the world an inestimable boon. The victory achieved, and the amount of good done in the more extended circulation of the Bible, will be a solace to you now for the labours expended, and sacrifices made, in carrying on and bringing to a successful issue that great enterprise. Finally, we earnestly hope that you may long be spared to enjoy the admiration and esteem of your congregation, surrounded by an affectionate family and amiable partner in life ; and that, when it pleases the great Head of the Church to take you to

himself, you may receive the blessed welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

'Signed by the Committee appointed for that purpose,
in name, and on behalf of the Congregation,

' ROBERT TAIT.

ROBERT HENDERSON.

ROBERT CARMICHAEL. JAMES WILSON.'

Dr. Thomson, under deep emotion, replied as follows:—

'Sir, Brethren, and Christian Friends,—It is now incumbent on me, in some way, to address you. I do not know how I shall do it. When Queen Anne died in 1714, the great Mr. Addison was entrusted by the Council to which he was secretary to inform the Elector of Hanover that the British throne was vacant, and that he, by the choice of the nation, was to be the successor. The brilliant essayist of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, quite overwhelmed with the importance of the business, went on to cull the fittest words and phrases for so great an occasion. But, in the meantime, hours were passing on, and hours the most important, as no one knew how soon the Popish Pretender might be proclaimed. At length the Council, impatient of delay, called in an humble clerk of the House of Lords, who, without difficulty, in the usual official style, informed George I. what was wanted. Now I pity the secretary, of whom Dr. Johnson said, "Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison;" and I envy the clerk, who sat down and wrote at once what was required. But I can't say I can do like him, for I cannot use the pen at all. Well I remember, often when I went up to that pulpit, and when I was under any difficulty, it was my habit to take refuge under a passage of Scripture; for in the Word of God I was sure to find far better things than any that could occur to myself. I am in the same difficulty now, and I consider the words of the Psalmist of Israel

quite applicable to myself: "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities." What would I do if I had not that to depend upon? for I greatly need that,—“Who healeth all thy diseases;” and I need that too—you all see it—“Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” I cannot but recollect the wondrous mercies of the Lord to me through my lengthened ministry. As I said at the dinner—I used the language of Jacob,—“I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant.” That made me think of my family; and if I have reason to be thankful for anything temporal, I have most of all to bless God for His kindness to me in that respect. Indeed, I cannot speak of it without being overwhelmed. When I saw around me this morning my wife and my children, and my children’s children—all looking with interest, and anxious to please me with whatever they said or did—how was it possible for me not to be very thankful? I bless God for it. I did not wish to have this honour heaped on me this day. I shrunk from it. When I thought of my age and my infirmity, and considered that possibly I should not be able to speak at all, I thought it was only prudent not to have any jubilee. However, the kindness of my colleague, of the Presbytery, and the committee, reconciled me to it; but nothing else would have induced me to make such a display of myself. I even could not go to the dinner without being carried to it. I knew I would be very unable to speak there; still less I supposed here. But having got thus far, I shall say I speak to you in very remarkable circumstances. I have not only been the minister of this congregation for the long period referred to, but I have been born and bred in

this place, a thing few ministers have to say. I could give a history of the congregation, not for fifty, but for more than seventy years back. The congregation has existed for nearly ninety years, and during all that long period I am only the second minister. I know of no other congregation of which the same thing can be said. Kelso was a very flourishing congregation. They were eminently taught by the good R. Nicol. Then good Mr. Hall came. But they have all gone. Then there was Stichel. I recollect the first minister of it. He ordained my predecessor. Stichel, Dunse, and Berwick, all have had four ministers. There happened something before I was ordained here that may be mentioned in illustration of the times. They set up a Sabbath school, I think about the year 1798. Sabbath schools were not in vogue then ; they were objected to by ministers of the Church as well as out of it. Mr. Riddoch, my predecessor, was uneasy in his mind about this Sabbath school, and being myself on the way to be a preacher, he employed me to look after it. The school grew and flourished ; but, popular as it was, its object was misrepresented to the authorities, and all connected with the school had to appear in Dunse, before the sheriff and his satellites. After being examined, we were ordered to give up everything about the school, and never attempt such an absurdity as teaching passages from the Word of God or any catechism. The people were afraid ; it was broken up, and never set on foot again till the year after I was ordained. Many a one has since been taught in that school who will have reason, I hope, to bless and obey God. It seems strange, however, it had got the name of Sabbath school, for it met on Monday night—(laughter)—a mistake more like Ireland than Coldstream. It was something like one of the regulations of the Irish Synod : “No member of court shall interrupt another while he is speaking, until he is done” (laughter). Notwithstanding the ignorance, as I will call it, of the ministers

of the Church—for if Mr. Goldie had been living then, he would not have attempted to dissolve it—the school went on flourishing. By the way, I wish you had been all present at the dinner to have heard the admirable speech made by Mr. Goldie. Well, the congregation, when they wanted a minister, sent a commissioner to the Synod to call a Mr. Scott ; but he was called to Musselburgh. The choice fell next on Mr. Riddoch. He continued here till 1804. He was not a popular man, but he was a good preacher, well read in the Bible and in the doctrines of divinity. I was licensed in 1804, and sent to Horndean, from which I was ordered to Fife, where I received a call from Leslie. Having been appointed to London for five months, I was to sail from Berwick ; but the ship, from some accident, could not proceed, and I had just to come back again. Mr. Dunlop, a fellow-student, was appointed to Coldstream ; but, by an engagement with him, I preached for him, and that was my first appearance in this place. From that day the Coldstream people have never forgotten me, nor I them. I was subsequently sent again to Horndean, but ultimately was ordained in Coldstream in 1806. I have reason to bless God I was ordained among you. I never looked for any great emolument ; but I liked the people among whom I laboured—and I laboured, I trust, not without success. The congregation increased much ; the admissions averaged, for some years, fifty a year ; and, by the year 1824, 1011 had been admitted, independently of certificates from other congregations. I do feel, more than I can express, for the beautiful address you have just read to me. I think it an honour to be the minister of a congregation that could produce such a paper ; and I feel also very grateful for what accompanied it—though it was done with such delicacy that they never mentioned it to me, and what is the amount I do not know. Indeed, when I think of all your kindness, I cannot but feel altogether over-

whelmed. The representative of the Presbytery spoke of my vigour of mind. Why, I have no longer any vigour at all. But I am thankful I can speak as I do. Age, you see, affects the intellect as well as the body. Yet how can I complain when I have such reason to bless God? My next call will be to enter the deep and dark valley of the shadow of death—that which has been the subject of my life and labours to warn you of. I earnestly hope it has been with effect, and that on the great day you may hear the words pronounced, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.” Again I thank you, and hope you will be more and more blessed.’ (Applause.)

This speech, except for the restraint—perceptible throughout its course—which had been imposed by very strong emotion, might be taken as a specimen of his conversation when any friend prompted him to speak of the past. Amidst the brief and broken sentences, too, we can discover several that are marked by his old skill and felicity of polish.

The meeting was then addressed by Drs. Macfarlane, Robson, and Jeffrey, in speeches worthy of their own talents and of the occasion. The eulogy throughout the whole celebration had been unexaggerated and discriminating; yet to be detained so long under its administration was a kind of torture to the modesty of Dr. Thomson; and he felt that praise has, by much repetition, its peculiar pillory. To withdraw from public applause to quiet domestic sympathy and congratulation, was, in his feeble state of health, a welcome relief.

His happy home circle had not, for more than a generation, been overshadowed by death; and none of the members were represented by sad memories around mere names. The sons and daughters that were absent were only distant, and could quickly return to complete the circle in their father’s house. Now, however, this was to be invaded by a desolating bereavement.

Towards the close of 1856, his eldest son—the Rev. Adam Thomson of Hawick, between whom and himself peculiarly tender and confidential bonds had existed almost from the boyhood of the former—was constrained, by delicate health, to pass the winter and following spring in the south of Europe ; and this separation from one on whom he so uniformly relied was a sore trial. But another separation, far more severely and permanently afflictive, was at hand—the death of the Doctor's wife, who had been to him 'better than sons and daughters.' Her illness was sudden and brief ; nor did it permit her to exchange a few sad yet satisfying words of farewell with *him*. Immediately before the crisis, she was helped to remove upstairs out of the rooms in the first flat, which he occupied ; and as she passed through the study, he happened to have fallen into his short afternoon sleep in his chair. She would not have him disturbed ; but glancing hastily to see (as for years she had daily cared to see) that his plaid was disposed to prevent him catching cold, and that his venerable head was resting easily, she silently left the room. Afterwards it was judged by the medical friends that the excitement of the briefest interview would be injurious to both. During the last days of her life she had only strength to whisper a few words, and these showed that to the very last pulse she was the devoted wife and mother, and the humble yet fervent Christian, who was 'casting' on the Redeemer *all—all* her 'care.' [Her faint voice could then make no word emphatic, but her repetition of the 'all,' and the look of her calm face, gave it an indescribable force.] She had through her long life been tenderly, intensely, and unremittingly solicitous about those who were dear to her ; but she now transferred 'all' her family 'cares' to the almighty Friend to whom she had unreservedly entrusted the salvation of her soul. She might have often thought that she had a special 'work' to do as long as her venerable husband survived ; but now she was resigned to

leave him behind, assured that the work of attending to him affectionately would never be neglected. Meanwhile he in his anguish could only pray for her. He was prevented from being near her deathbed, to support the beloved sufferer with the precious promises which he had often administered to the dying among his people and to strangers; yet he had the consolation of knowing that the 'one thing needful' for her peace and good hope in death had not been forgotten by her down to the last hour, but that, in the long season of health, hers had been a genuine and active religion, though, like her modest character, it was free from noise, glare, or fuss. She whispered in the hearing of her daughters, all of whom, along with her only sister, were beside her, 'The Lord is my Shepherd;' hence she could 'fear no evil,' she could want no blessing. She asked her three little granddaughters from Hawick to sing the hymn—

'Here we suffer grief and pain,'—

an intimation, characteristically modest, that she was passing to the land of joyful rest. She died on the 27th January 1857. The following letter from the eldest son, who was at Gibraltar when he received the intelligence of his mother's sudden illness and death, paid a tribute not more beautiful than just to her rare excellences, and ministered to his father the most effectual solace:—

'GIBRALTAR, 12th Feb. 1857.

'MY DEAR FATHER,—Alas! I can no longer conjoin with yours that dear name of mother. Yesterday brought me Elizabeth's letter with the tidings of my beloved mother's death, and of the sad, sad illness which preceded it. As yet, I can hardly realize it, and it all seems to me at times like a troubled dream. And yet it is indeed true that the best of mothers is gone from us, as to this world, for ever. Little did I think, when I received her gentle kiss, and heard her affectionate

farewell at parting three months ago, that I was parting with her for the last time. I did not feel sufficiently that it was possible it might even be so, or at least that it might be so through *her* being the one removed. Somehow I could never imagine my mother old. She was still the same mother to me as in my childhood. There was still the same affectionateness, and care, and even activity for every one of us ; her very looks were still so much the same, and she seemed so necessary to all of us—and oh ! how necessary to *you*—that *her* removal from our circle—especially hers being the first—never entered as it ought to have done into my thoughts of the future. And still I cannot think of home without her dear familiar presence. Let me try as I will, her loved and loving form is still before me there ; I still hear her well-known voice, and I still see her moving about, attending to every one's wants but her own. The reality seems to me an illusion, and the illusion a reality ; but the reality is reality after all. And oh ! what a desolating change to all of us ; but how desolating, most of all, my dear father, to you ! You will miss her every hour—every moment. It almost seems as if she must miss you. For the last six years especially you have been in her every thought. We do not know the nature of the great change which death brings ; but glorified spirits, though infinitely pure and blessed, and—oh, delightful thought !—free from all weariness and suffering, and their joy full in the presence of their God and Redeemer, are still their former selves. And I cannot conceive of my dear mother even in heaven without thoughts of you. For aught we know, she who ministered to you on earth may be permitted, though unseen, to minister to you still. And I can well conceive that part of her great bliss is in the anticipation of being joined to you again, as if, without you, she could not be made perfect. I am sure that a great part of *your* happiness now will be the good hope, through grace, of that glorious world where she now is, and of meeting

her there. In the meantime the Lord has taken her from you, and He had a right to do so, for she was more His than yours ; and though you are bowed down under your own loss, you will be thankful on her account that she is with the Lord, and has entered into His glorious rest. He who, she could say, was her "Shepherd," has been with her through the dark valley, and led her to dwell in His house for ever ; and for all this you will praise Him even amid your tears. And you will praise Him, too, that she was spared to you so long—from your youth to your manly prime, and thence to your old age ; that she helped you to bear the burden and heat of the day, and accompanied you in her kind and constant offices of ministering love so far into the shades of evening ; and that your children also enjoyed the benefit of her wise and affectionate training until they had reached mature years, so that their character may be supposed to have, in a great measure, taken its mould from her ; and her love and great worth are no dim and shadowy memory with them, but the matter of a distinct recollection, which I trust they will never cease to cherish and improve. All this, and much more, must furnish ground of unspeakable thankfulness. But your grand ground of thankfulness, I am sure, will be felt to be that, though my dear mother is taken away from you, "the Lord liveth,"—her Lord and yours : hers in heaven, in the full revelation of His glory ; yours on earth, in that promised grace which will not fail you till you join her there, but bear you up in your remaining pilgrimage, and do "exceeding abundantly for you, above all that you ask or think." I know that what remains of the way on earth will, at present, seem very dark to you. You have often known trials, but this is the heaviest of all, and it is one which casts its deep shadow over all the earthly future. But God is more and better to us than all earthly stays and comforts ; and it is because He would have us to know this that He removes at times from us some one on whom we leaned too much, and

graciously constrains us to lean entirely on Himself. And what a fulness there is in *Him*! what a fulness of resources! what a fulness of love! We know His power, and we cannot doubt His willingness to help and bless us, and supply our every want; for "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Oh! what glory there in the cross! It is the sun which chases away all our darkness. All our consolations, all our hopes, circle round it. Our sorest trials are blessings; and so, my beloved father, may you find it, when they bring us nearer to the cross.

'What a time of anxiety and affliction to my dear sisters the time of my mother's illness must have been! If I was denied their melancholy privilege of clinging to her and ministering to her during her last days and hours, I was also spared their anguish in witnessing her prostration and sufferings. It was a great blessing that they were all permitted to be around her, and that even Lawson, though so far off, was able to be there for the last two days of her life. Everything, I am sure, which the most tender and affectionate watching on their part could do was done; and there was every advantage of skill, and all kind attentions on the part of medical attendants, as well as the sympathy of many kind friends. But the wisest and kindest Friend of all claimed His sovereign right of directing the issue; and what *He* sees to be best, always *must be* best. I am sure each of you was ready to say, with "strong crying and tears," when you saw the threatened cup, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." But I trust you were enabled to add, with our great Pattern, "Nevertheless, if it may not pass from me except I drink it, Thy will be done." May all of us have grace to say still, "Good is the will of the Lord."

'If there had been a vessel for England when I received the tidings yesterday, I do not know what I might have done; but calmer thoughts tell me that it is my duty to remain

abroad. My going home could not recall my dear mother. "I could not bring her back again," even if I would. And though I would fain mingle my tears with yours, and those of others left behind, I could at present do little more, and might lose what I have gained in health, and debar myself from the strength which is now more than ever necessary for the future. I cannot be too thankful for its being mercifully so ordered that I was here when the sad tidings came, rather than at Malaga, and among strangers, and that I am to be here, if spared, for some weeks to come. The kindness and sympathy of Mr. Smith I shall never forget ; and the very servants and all the people about the house seem to have taken their tone from him. I had a long and most kind and consolatory letter from Mr. Sutherland, the minister, who is still unable, poor man, to leave the house. There will now be a gloom cast over all that remains of my stay abroad ; and I need not say how nervously anxious I shall be for letters from home. I fear my directions of a fortnight ago may have led you to address my letters to Malta ; but my letter of last week will correct that for the future. I sincerely trust that the health of none of you has suffered after all your long and anxious watching, now that the relapse has come following on the first excitement. . . .

‘What a mercy it was that Isabella was able to be with my dear mother during her last illness ! If she had been staying at Portsmouth, it might have been impossible ; and so might it have been with Jessie if she had still been at Kilmarnock. My kindest love to all my sisters, and to Lawson. I know how deeply they will all feel the death of our beloved mother. I need not say that they all have my tenderest sympathy and my prayers. Remember me very kindly to Peggy. I feel very grateful for all her kind attentions to my dear mother, and now to you. Could you not engage her son, Archie, to sleep with you, or in the study, where he would be near you, and would,

I am sure, attend very kindly to your wants? I cannot bear to think of you being alone by night or by day. Express my gratitude also to my Uncle Matthew and Matthew James.

‘And now, my dear father, I hardly know how to break off my letter to you. I need not tell you that you are the subject with me of many anxious thoughts and prayers. I trust that God will be with you to uphold and comfort you, for He only effectually can. I hope you will be enabled to “cast all your care on Him,”—“*all* your care,” as my dear mother said; and then, even though “sorrowful,” you will be “always rejoicing.”—Believe me, with the deepest sympathy, my dear father, your ever affectionate son,

ADAM THOMSON.

‘Thank Elizabeth very much for her letter to me. No letter bearing such heavy tidings could have been framed with more considerateness and kindness. For that, too, as for many other things connected with this sore trial, I have much—very much—cause of thankfulness. I am now wearying for a ship by which to send this letter to you. I hope there will be one soon.

A. T.

‘Rev. Dr. Thomson.’

From many brethren in the ministry, who had enjoyed the hospitality of the Secession manse at Coldstream, and observed how much it was enhanced by Mrs. Thomson’s unaffected kindness, grace, and dignity, and by her wise management, Dr. Thomson received letters of sympathy and consolation. It was soothing to find that the rare worth of the deceased was widely appreciated; but for long the loss of her presence, as well as of her services, continued to be felt every day with new bitterness, as if that loss were a growing privation. Henceforth, as long as he was able to go out, his favourite drive was along the Lennel road, from which he could see the churchyard, and the corner near the ruined church, where,

beside the graves of his forefathers and many of his kindred, was the grave of his wife; and though no words were then spoken by him, his wistful glance towards the spot, and the solemn expression of his countenance, told that he was musing on the not distant time when he would be gathered to his fathers and reunited to the partner of his pilgrimage. He appeared to have lost all his interest in Flodden and Wark, and their stirring associations; a more potent charm drew him to Lennel, though the memories and meditations—native to this melancholy scene—remained wholly unexpressed. They would have been gloomy to other minds, and he kept them within his own, whilst there they acquired no morbid influence. His thoughts, indeed, about dear departed friends, and his anticipations of a speedy reunion with them, turned to that glorious home of redeemed spirits, ‘which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive,’ far more frequently and yearningly than to the narrow chamber for the poor body. He delighted to follow the saint, who had just closed his troubled earthly life by passing through the agonies of the death-struggle, entering immediately into that state of perfect happiness and purity, where not the faintest traces remain of the ‘hour and power of darkness’ at his recent heartrending dissolution, or of his former frail lifetime—not even the dimness of a tear, the quivering of a sigh, or the tremor of an agitation, still less any soil or shadow of pollution. The contemplation of this destiny for the departed soul more than reconciled him to the doom for the deserted body of ‘dust to dust.’

In the last two years of Dr. Thomson’s life, all the surviving members of his father’s household died, leaving himself the last of the group, though he had been the oldest. A favourite sister, married to a cousin, had been first removed; next, after many years, and shortly before the death of his wife, his brother Alexander, who had been long engaged in

shipping business in London, and was widely known among the successful Scotchmen of the metropolis for his rare qualities. He was marked by a sturdy yet delicate manliness of character, and by a quaint yet quick and ready humour. A Scot as he was, from the banks of the Tweed, he preferred the neighbourhood of the Thames as incomparably more pleasant and sanitary, and he spoke of London as a dwelling-place with more than the emphatic ardour of Dr. Samuel Johnson. With his cousin Sir Peter Laurie, and his friend Sir John Pirie, before and after, as well as when they successively held the dignity of Lord Mayor of London, he was a cherished intimate; and most imposingly decorated servants from the Mansion House were wont to bring him the following terse and homely note, signed by 'P. Laurie,' or 'J. Pirie:—'DEAR SANDY,—Kail at — o'clock; many of the notes inviting to grand municipal feasts, as well as to plain family dinners. In 1853 his friends in London observed strong symptoms of fast decaying health, and urged him to seek recovery by taking a few holiday months in the Border district. He refused to acknowledge that he was ill, yet left for Coldstream. He reached Monilaws, a farm occupied by his affectionate nephew Mr. Adam Thomson Douglas, and situated about four miles south of Coldstream. He never got farther, as he suddenly became much worse; and when Dr. and Mrs. Thomson hastened to see him, they found him critically ill; and the two brothers, who had always before met in perfect health, appeared to each other as stricken and dying men. On a second visit in a day or two, the Doctor, instead of being taken to his brother's room, was at once asked to pray for him, as he was just breathing his last; and before a few whispered ejaculations for mercy were ended, the intimation was brought that all was over; and the two brothers were finally parted on earth. When the Doctor was still more infirm, and after the loss of his wife, his two sisters, Mrs.

Douglas (Coldstream) and Mrs. Sim (London), were taken away ; and the death of the former sister blotted out the many associations with the whole of his long life, which her daily visits to the manse reproduced. All who went to the grave before him had, for a considerable period, seemed much less infirm than himself.

He occasionally indulged in his old habit of travelling ; and a year and a half before his death he took a journey beyond London, to visit his younger son, Dr. George Lawson Thomson, in Hampshire. The tenderest attentions of the family, and the change of scene, made his residence there—of several weeks—delightful. He there, too, baptized a grandson. The son, whose guest he was, was admirably qualified, not only by his affection, but by his enthusiastic temperament and the keen vivacity of his whole nature, to bring back the most stirring associations of the past, and to awaken in his father's mind the most lively and pleasant recollections. The very name which he bore in honour of the Selkirk divine, would restore that father's youth ; and as the most laborious and successful portion of the father's career had been contemporary with the son's growth into manhood, the son's references to former days had a double charm for the old man.

All along he had been observed to be specially cheerful in the company of his son Lawson, and, we may add, in that of his daughter Isabella (who had been married to Mr. Green) ; for they could so quickly, genially, and skilfully connect bright reminiscences of the past with present experience, and enable him to return from the happy days which he had spent with them in Edinburgh and London, and the far happier and longer period of their undivided lives in Coldstream, to the altered Present, without an oppressive sadness.

After returning from England, and remaining a few weeks at home, he proceeded to Glasgow on a visit to his youngest daughter. His frailties were increasing, and he began to show

an occasional dimness or blank of memory regarding recent times and affairs; but then, and down to his last month, his morning and evening prayers had their old variety, richness, and freshness. He had also become much less inclined for driving out, and sat in the house constantly reading, except when his stirring grandchildren called off his attention to some freak of theirs, when, with his excessive good-nature, he would at once comply with their wishes. His little namesake had taken a fancy for controlling the gaslight; and the old man was not only contented with the light, the twilight, the all but darkness, and often the total darkness which the urchin permitted to fall upon the pages of the book, but was ready to seem greatly amused to gratify the childish mischief-maker. Not only his stick and his watch, but even his spectacles, were at any time free to be appropriated by the juveniles; and he smiled at, as well as submitted to, the inconvenience, however protracted.

When in Glasgow, he—assisted by Dr. James Robertson (a United Presbyterian minister in the first rank for abilities in that city, which is the headquarters of their denomination)—baptized another grandchild, Elizabeth Thomson Landreth. He had already baptized four of her brothers and sisters, the ceremony having been, on account of the state of his health, performed—in the *fourth* case, as it was now in the *fifth*—in the house, though throughout his ministry he was strongly opposed to its private administration, unless circumstances rendered it necessary. Out of the small group present at that Glasgow baptism, the two ministers who officiated soon died; and two of the children—the babe that received the Christian rite, and the sister next to her in age—were not long in following their grandfather into the other world.¹

¹ Elizabeth Thomson Landreth died 2d January 1864, aged 4 years 4 months; and on the 26th of the same month and year died Agnes Jeffrey Landreth, aged 6 years 6 months. The former child has now been longer away from her parents than she was permitted to be with them; yet she,

This visit to Glasgow extended over a much longer period than he had ever before, during his ministry, spent out of Coldstream; and after he returned home, he never again either travelled to such a distance, or remained nearly as long away. His daughters affectionately tended him, as his infirmities increased much more rapidly than his years; and they had now no longer the very important help of 'Peggy,' a faithful and highly esteemed domestic, who had been for more than twenty years in the family, and would not have left it but for her marriage. She continued to take a warm interest in the

like her little sister-saint, has never been out of their thoughts and affections, and both have continued to be members of the family. Their beauty, that drew the gaze of strangers, and grew in fascination for the eyes that daily saw it, was the least of their charms, for their inner qualities formed their chief attraction, and their loving hearts shed forth ever-fresh loveliness. The younger (whom her little sister had called *Livy* for Elizabeth, and who received the same name from us all) was, when in perfect health, attacked by diphtheria, and in three weeks, just as she was believed to have passed the crisis, she began to sink, and soon died. For any friends who were ill, she had been wont to pray of her own accord, mentioning plainly and artlessly what 'ailed' them, and asking that they should be 'made well;' and often she would have six or eight persons on her mind at once; but, under the malady in her little throat, she sometimes begged her mamma 'to say her prayers for her.' During the great restlessness which preceded death, she asked her mamma to kiss her, as if that would relieve the sore bewilderment; and throughout her illness she could not bear to see either of her parents leave her room. Infant though she was, she knew and loved the Redeemer.

'Come to Jesus—just now,' had long been her favourite hymn; and, however exhausted, she never failed to join eagerly in the chorus, and to make her sweet voice audible above the others. Her sister Agnes, who sorrowed over the loss of her constant playmate with a grief beyond her years, fell ill in a few days of fever; and when this had worn out her strength, diphtheria showed itself, and the patient child succumbed to the twofold assault. Once, on awaking out of sleep, she began to speak of *Livy*. 'She's in heaven. We need not be sorry for *Livy*. I'm glad she's pleased. I feel as if her arms were round my neck. She has got rest for the weary, and is happy with Jesus. Her body's in the —;' but quickly checking herself, she continued, 'her soul's in heaven—she is walking with Jesus.' On the day of her death she was thought to be much better, until the doctor gave the ominous direction to let her have whatever she liked. Yet before a word or look from any one could have communicated to the

inmates of the manse, and, on the death of Mrs. Thomson, she returned to render valuable service. In a year or two, however, she was removed by death, amidst the regret of all who knew her worth; and the charge of attending to the Doctor's comfort was exclusively undertaken by his two daughters, and was performed with unwearied tenderness.

Towards the close of 1860, he was overtaken by a sore trial in the departure of his eldest son from Hawick, to take a pastoral charge in Sydney, New South Wales.

His son had shared largely and figured prominently in the

gentle sufferer the least hint of the issue, she began calmly to say to her mamma that she 'was going to die, and to be happy with Jesus;' and she added, after a pause, that she was 'thinking of *Livy*,' as if assured of being soon with her. She was told what a love Jesus had for her, and all who trusted in Him—to make her joyful at the thought of going away to Him. 'Yes,' she answered eagerly; and to make us resigned to the trial of losing her, she added, 'and He loves *you*, and *you*,' looking from one to the other with a smile we can never forget. She exchanged with us a last earthly farewell, and called out in a clear tone to her sister, looking in at the door, 'Good-bye, Isabella.' [Her two brothers were out of hearing; one laid down by fever, and the other by diphtheria.] Her demeanour and words were remarkable, and will never be forgotten by those who stood by, and had little of her composure. She had more than a child's notion of death, for she had recently seen and intensely felt what it was. Her father had taken her into the room to see all that remained of *Livy*; and her little hand trembled in his, and a shudder passed through her frame, as, gazing on the inanimate face and form of her once restless and happy playmate, she was struck with the awful difference! She knew, too, where the body of her little darling had been carried and laid. Some months before, she had been absent for a few days from home, and she shrunk with keen grief from the idea of again going away for the shortest time without her mother's company. Yet now she spoke tranquilly and joyfully of taking that solitary journey through the 'valley of the shadow of death,' which has appalled the stoutest hearts, and of leaving parents and friends far behind. She had seen death in such a real aspect and relation, as must have annihilated juvenile romance, and mere phrases got by rote, about 'going home.' What enabled her, a specially sensitive and timid child of six years and a half, to rise above the fear of 'the last enemy?' Those two little sisters were 'lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided;' but in their vacant places their memories will live. A parent will be excused for inserting their names in a corner of the biography of their grandfather, who often blessed his 'children's children.'

associations—private and public, happy and sorrowful—of that energetic and productive portion of his father's life which dated forward from the latter's manly prime, and from the former's peculiarly early spring-time, when he studied for the ministry. The son—not only from the age of eighteen, when he was duly licensed to preach, but from the age of eleven, when he entered college—had appreciated his father with a judgment and sympathy which, though far beyond his years, had none of the sickliness and frailty that mark precocity; and he was constantly at his father's side, deeply interested in, and encouraging his varied labours. The 'boy' was not only 'father' to his own 'manhood,' but he was brother to the manhood of his father; and the senior received from the youth—along with the fondest filial reverence and love—something like the sympathy and help of a younger brother. Throughout the long struggle in the Bible cause, Dr. Thomson relied more on the advice and aid offered by his son Adam, than on the wisdom and kindness of any other coadjutor; and the son was eminently worthy of such a preference. The presence and conversation of the latter never failed to impart cheerfulness to his father in the most depressed mood springing from his illness. Mr. Thomson was induced, by the weighty consideration of the health of his family, as well as of himself, to remove to a pastoral sphere in Sydney, New South Wales, where the climate was almost sure to give him immunity from the dangerous attacks which had repeatedly, for months, interrupted him in the effective discharge of his ministry to a prosperous and warmly-attached congregation at Hawick. To Mr. Thomson—with his intellect, accomplishments, eloquence, and capacity for moving and directing all who came within his range—there were several other reasons confirming his decision to go to Sydney; at the same time, it involved the most painful resistance to many influences and motives that urged him to remain in his native land. In his farewell speech to

his Presbytery, when referring to the 'ties that would be sundered' by his departure,—the ties 'to his beloved people, whom he had gone out and in among since he was a mere youth of twenty,' and the ties to his ministerial brethren in the district,—he alluded pointedly, and with deep pathos, to 'family ties, especially the tie to one revered relative, whom he could never hope to see in this world again'—his venerable father, who was above fourscore. No son could have more keenly felt such a parting; nor did his father encounter it with feelings that had either been deadened or blunted by old age, though unquestionably age had rendered his moods much less continuous; and painful subjects quickly passed away from his mind, instead of being long detained to be brooded over. As he looked on his son (then along with his family on the farewell visit at Coldstream), his face ever shone with the old love and trust; but it was only now and then that the idea of the departure came and was held before his mind; and then his face was clouded by a grief, and an expression of loneliness, which it was truly painful to witness. The young members of the Hawick family had also been peculiarly dear to him; and often had he conveyed them, for pleasure visits, from their father's to their grandfather's manse, and promoted their juvenile recreations. The ready and loving way in which all of them anticipated and gratified his wishes, was seen and felt, and with benignant looks acknowledged. On his last Sabbath in Scotland, Mr. Thomson preached in his, and in his father's native place; but the father was not able to be a hearer, though exceedingly eager to listen again, and for the final opportunity, to the familiar voice burdened with the gospel message. The beautiful paraphrase, 'O God of Bethel,' etc., was the service of praise at the last exercise of family worship that preceded Mr. Thomson's departure. The father and the son, when the moment of separation came, were left alone, as the scene was too tender to be overlooked; but, next day, Dr.

Thomson mentioned that 'he and Adam could only speak—to exchange "God be always with you."' On Mr. Thomson reaching his remote destination, and stepping ashore at Sydney, a letter from the old country was found to have far outstripped him; and it conveyed a message from his father to the effect that he (the son) had never done anything in his whole life that vexed or displeased his father—a pleasant assurance to him when settling in a strange land; but this was immediately followed by another letter from Coldstream communicating the intelligence of his father's death!

The unusually intense cold of the winter of 1860-1 had a most injurious effect on the slow vital action and enfeebled frame of Dr. Thomson, soon prostrating the venerable man; and, in spite of repeated rallyings, nothing but a fatal issue, and that before long, could be expected. Not to the very last, however—even after he could no longer occupy himself for a minute or two in the READING which had hitherto, during the years of his disablement and affliction, kept him busy and happy in his chair, through all the hours of each long day—would he consent to remain in bed. The constitutional activity stirred under the weight of fourscore years, and under the terrible arrest of paralysis. He was eager to be up at his usual hour in the morning, though the movement of being helped to his chair gave him much pain, and though—when with difficulty and uneasiness maintaining his posture there—he could obtain no relief or solace in any of the books which were around him, and which had so long been his choice companions and comforters. That he could now make no use of his precious library, seemed a far greater hardship than the inability to move his limbs; yet without a murmur he bore the new privation—this sealing up of the inexhaustible fountain of knowledge, sympathy, and consolation; and he was pleased to look at the books, which, after stimulating and helping him in the long term of his activity, had

become his inseparable bosom friends during his enforced confinement and repose. He had constantly avoided all encouragements to sloth, and now reluctantly exchanged his uncomfortable chair for a sofa—a luxury for which he had none of Cowper's fondness ; and nothing but a heavier pressure of suffering would have overcome his dislike to the recumbent posture in broad daylight. He had, indeed, tenaciously preserved those former habits which might have been expected to be broken up by the first stroke of paralysis. Down to his last winter, and even under the accumulation of infirmities and disablements, he continued to pay the old scrupulous attention to his morning toilet, shaving himself, and preparing to come out of his bedroom into the parlour with a care as exact as if he were about to appear in the pulpit, though the daily process occupied a long time, and must have sorely tried both strength and patience. 'Cleanliness next to godliness' was his maxim to the end ; and the shining face, the snow-white and orderly locks, and the stainless neckcloth and linen did not detract from his embodiment of venerable piety, but—as in the case of John Wesley—lent to this a new charm. Cleanliness and order were, in both of these Christian veterans, primary characteristics ; and, doubtless, along with their habits of early rising, temperance, and ceaseless industry, they tended to promote the physical health and vigour for which they were remarkable.

A literary work by a relative was at this time in the press ; and as it was dedicated to Dr. Thomson, an effort was made to get an early copy, which might be put into his hands. He held the volume for hours, and expressed himself gratified ; and the author must have been more than satisfied to give to the affectionate old man a momentary pleasure.

The Bible was ever beside him ; and when he could no longer read in it, the opening of the sacred volume probably recalled many striking passages in the particular books of

Scripture at which the volume opened ; for his memory of the words of God had always been remarkably comprehensive, minute, and accurate ; and that memory—even if more shattered than it was—must have retained in its every fragment some ‘ great and precious promises.’

Kind inquiries about him were regularly made by his brethren in the ministry ; and his affectionate and excellent colleague, Mr. Mearns—who, however, during the last months of the Doctor’s life, was frequently taken from Coldstream by engagements in connection with a most interesting and promising revival movement which was being carried on in various southern districts—tenderly conversed with him about what had been the grand theme of his long ministry, and was now the joy and the stay of his soul in the immediate prospect of death. Though now, as ever, ready to speak of the divine mercy and of the hopes of the gospel, he retained his old modest reserve about his own spiritual condition, moods, and exercises, and shrunk from exposing the subjects of his most secret praise and prayer. But no close observer needed the assurance of a formal confession that he had sought and found Christian support for dying, and was rejoicing in the faith which he had so earnestly urged upon others.

His younger son, Dr. George Lawson Thomson, came to be with him for more than a week, and this visit was specially cheering. The old man’s dim and unsteady eye was keen enough to note in some of this son’s features a resemblance, which he had never before seen, to his recently deceased mother ; and he was deeply affected. It should have been mentioned that, throughout the whole of this winter, and during all the stages of his last illness, his youngest daughter with her family was beside him, watching, like her sisters, over him with loving care. He was surrounded by the ‘ old familiar faces,’ except those that were separated by impracticable distances ; and he knew that his elder son, now voyaging

to Australia, and Mrs. Green, residing with her husband in a foreign land, were incessantly thinking of him with the most anxious affection, and envying those members of the old household who had the opportunity of ministering to his wants.

Under the increasing severity of the winter, his powers of speech were affected along with his general health. His articulation became difficult and indistinct, and it cost him a painful effort to take part even in very brief conversations. When he could no longer read or talk, he appeared to be engrossed in meditation and prayer, and occasionally an ejaculatory sentence of supplication found utterance. After the uneasiness of approaching death had set in, he was overheard praying, 'The Lord bless me through the merits of His Son, through whom He is never tired of blessing His people.' Every petition which he breathed was pointedly in the name and for the sake of Christ; and he dwelt not more fervently on the help which he wanted than on the grounds on which it would be granted—the meritorious righteousness of the 'great Redeemer.' To the different members of the family, as they came beside him and quoted some of the Scripture promises with which he had been wont to cheer the dying, he often said, 'The Lord be with you;' and they will always regard this not only as a blessing on them from their dying father, but as a testimony about himself, acknowledging the gracious presence of God in the solemn crisis; and they will cling to this memorable wish as meaning, 'May your father's God be your God!' His eldest daughter had by this time been prostrated by a dangerous attack of bronchitis; and to her it was a deep grief that she was denied the privilege of witnessing and soothing his last moments.

On the evening of the 22d February it was plain that the end was near, and, physically as well as spiritually, it was 'peace.' Through the previous night he had been distressingly restless and breathless, but he was now composed; nor was

the calm that of insensibility. He had a clear and tranquil consciousness, though his bodily frame was reduced to very great feebleness. He held out his hand to each of his daughters as a farewell. He did the same to his son-in-law, whom also—at intervals—he repeatedly asked to ‘pray’ with him; and this word ‘pray’ was the last he uttered. The darkness of death was settling over the wasted features, and over the half-closed and nearly fixed eyes, when the face became strangely radiant from a light which his hand, that had been motionless for hours, was raised to shade off. The contrast was seen by all; but in a little there was again merely the dimness of the taper that had been burning all night in the room. The hours of watching slowly passed, and the light of a mild spring morning entered to show the still more pallid and death-like aspect of the expiring saint. Suddenly more than the former radiance was shed over him, so that his eyes opened with a lustre and a rapturous expression which scattered the thickening film, and his brow and whole countenance lost every ‘spot and wrinkle,’ and seemed transfigured by youth and by youth’s happy life, whilst his silvery locks had a peculiar glow. He breathed his last before this reflection had vanished; and when it was suggested to shut the yet beaming eyes which looked upwards, one of the family, excited by what all had witnessed with wonder, could not bear to have the brightness sealed up. He died in the 82d year of his age, and in the 55th year of his ministry.

Before quitting this solemn scene, readers may wish to see how the emotions and impressions of the mourning family around the death-bed were entirely shared by the absent and far distant son, who best knew his father, and whose privilege of rare intimacy had developed such a filial love and honour as were equally rare. The following letter from the Rev. Adam Thomson, formerly of Hawick, then of Sydney, in New South Wales, was written on the day when he received

the news that his father was no more,—a day which was made further memorable and trying to him, as being that on which he was for the first time to see and preach to the new flock of which he had gone from Scotland to take the oversight. Yet even on that day he must seize a few minutes for writing by the returning mail to the Coldstream circle, to convey, in hurried phrase, his fraternal sympathies under the heavy bereavement, as well as to allay painful anxieties about himself and his family, by telling how he had reached the far-off land of his adoption, and been received with the most lavish, yet the most delicate kindnesses by his new congregation.

‘SYDNEY, *April 19, 1861.*

‘MY DEAREST ELIZABETH,—Your letters with the heavy tidings of my dear father’s death reached us this forenoon, and as yet I am so bewildered and overwhelmed that I hardly know how to write. I cannot realize it yet. It was only on Sabbath last that we got into harbour. I trembled to open my letters, which were brought to me before I left the ship. My beloved father was first in my thoughts, and I cannot tell you my relief on reading that he was still with you, and much as when I left. This threw me, I think, off my guard, for I had not at all the same apprehension to-day, forgetting, I suppose, that the intelligence of to-day would be a month later than that received on Sabbath. I can only say, ‘This is the Lord,’ and I am sure it is all right; but the stroke is very desolating. How little one knows beforehand what it is to be left fatherless! And yet what a privilege it is to have had such a father, and how precious the remembrance of him must ever be! And he was long with us; till, on his own account, it would have been cruel to wish to detain him from his glorious rest. Into that rest he has now entered; and it becomes us to bless the Lord, whose will it is, that where He is, there also should His servants be. It was very soothing to me to hear of the peacefulness with which he fell asleep. I

had very often been praying of late that there might be given to him, amid the gathering shadows, bright glimpses of the Saviour and of the coming glory as he was able to bear them; and it seemed to me, when I read your account of that looking up with an expression of radiant joy, as if the prayer were fulfilled. Whatever may have been his experience before death, we know what a burst of glory there must have been after it, as he left the tabernacle in which he had long "groaned being burdened," and "absent from the body," was "present with the Lord." Oh that we may all join him at last in the Lord's presence!

'I am much concerned, my dear Elizabeth, to hear of *your* illness. I am apt to mourn unduly at not being permitted to be with my beloved father in his last moments, and to reproach myself for being so far away; and yet you were denied the privilege, though still under the paternal roof. I know you must have felt it a sad aggravation of the trial, and it shows that you must have been ill and weak indeed. I earnestly trust that you are now comparatively strong again. We shall all long anxiously for next mail, which I hope will bring good tidings of you. It was a great mercy that Esther was so able to minister to my father when you were laid aside, and that dear Jessie, too, was there. I am so thankful that Lawson was able to be with him so near the last, and that he would be with you all afterwards when you would greatly need his counsel and help. Mr. Landreth, too, would be a great comfort; and be sure you give my warmest thanks to Matthew James¹ for all his kind attentions to my dear father and to you. Give my sincere thanks also to Isabella Chisholm, Isabella Kiddy, and to Mr. Mearns. . . . You will be anxious to hear something of us; but I am really not in a state to write at any length. Everything hitherto, I can only say, has gone

¹ Dr. Matthew James Turnbull—a nephew of Dr. Thomson, and his very kind and skilful medical attendant.

so as to give us cause of unspeakable thankfulness. It was 124 days from the time we left London until we arrived in Sydney ; but the voyage, though long, was throughout most comfortable ; there was not a day's illness on the part of one of us. Then the reception we have met with here has been most kind and encouraging, and far exceeding my most sanguine expectations. According to arrangements made before my arrival, Dr. M'Kay of the Free Church (who has been remarkably kind) is to preach the introductory sermon, and a Dr. Reid is to preach in the evening. Of course I preach myself in the afternoon. How I am to preach now, however, I hardly know ; yet even amid my tears, I would desire to thank God and take courage. I have indeed unspeakable cause of thanksgiving. There are a thousand things which I would say and ask if I were with you, which I cannot say or ask now ; and my mind is as yet so stunned and confused, that I cannot command my thoughts.

'Sunday Evening.

'I have got through the service to-day far beyond my expectations. Dr. M'Kay, who spoke most kindly of myself in his introductory sermon, paid a most touching and beautiful tribute to the memory of my dear father, which I could not help acknowledging in the close of my sermon this afternoon. My first service among my people here has indeed been in deeply solemn circumstances. It seems almost as if we had been detained in our voyage that I might begin my ministry under a more realizing sense of the powers of the world to come. I feel as if I heard that dear familiar voice saying to me, but saying in tones which even it could not have commanded till now, "Work while it is day ; the night cometh when no man can work."

'Remember me with a brother's warmest love and sympathy to dear Isabella when you write.—Ever yours,

'ADAM THOMSON.'

The intimation of Dr. Thomson's decease drew forth many tributes, public and private, to his services and character. The following is a vivid representation, in a few words, by the Rev. John Ker of Glasgow :—

‘ Though it is now a good while since I saw him last, and many events and changes have rolled between, his face and form came up before me so vividly when I received the announcement, that I felt it the sudden shock of a personal loss. I thought of his silvery hairs, and blithe smile, and kind heart that never changed, of the many acts of friendship I have received from him, of the happy days and nights I have spent at Coldstream before death broke in on your happy circle ; and the thought of his removal came upon me with a pang. I think the last time I saw him for any length was when he and I met at Hawick at your brother's, and we drove down together in his gig through pleasant Teviotdale. He was so fresh still, and full of reminiscences, and brave and strong after all his struggles. I shall always be glad that I knew your father, for he is a pleasant recollection to keep in a corner of one's heart to think about,—such a fine, elastic, hopeful nature, and such a cheerful, courageous Christianity in him. It does me good to think of him ; and my sorrow is, that I shall see his face no more. I need not repeat to you, I am sure, the grounds of comfort you have in this loss. He has done the work he had to do most worthily and well, and has gone to the grave full of years and honours. Wherever he was known, and that was in no narrow circle, he was not merely esteemed, but beloved with a personal affection ; and, what is remarkable in the case of old men, he not only kept it, but increased it to the last. What is best of all, you do not need to sorrow without hope. Your father's Christianity was of that transparent, single-minded kind that leaves no doubt about it. It was as open and engaging as his look. I have been thinking of the days I have spent at Coldstream, and the walks I have

had by the clear sunny Tweed from the time I first went to Alnwick—

“So sad, so sweet the days that are no more!”

But we must turn our eyes hopefully on, and do our best in sorrow, and struggle to follow those who have gone before, keeping our hearts warm by the thought of a happy meeting with them.’

The following extract is from a letter by the Rev. Dr. M‘Gavin of Dundee, who was married to a niece of Dr. Thomson for only a few months, when death removed her:—

‘For myself, I feel as if this stroke has severed the last living link of a thousand of life’s sweetest, saddest, and most sacred associations in the chambers of memory. Your father’s name and image always stirred deepest chords of hallowed emotion, and it seems as if his removal had gathered the final shadow of death around the generation of which he was to me the last living ornament and venerable representative.’

We might have given place to a letter from his old associate, Dr. Campbell of London, written to the bereaved family; but we prefer to insert the Doctor’s more deliberate estimate, voluntarily tendered several years later, when he was closing his career as a journalist, and taking an editorial leave of his many readers. In his ‘Valedictory Address’ in the *British Standard* (Dec. 28th, 1866), when taking a retrospect, he introduces the following glowing eulogy on Dr. Adam Thomson:—

‘I should be unworthy of the friendship of one of Scotland’s noblest sons if, in this review, I could forget the name and services of Dr. Adam Thomson, Presbyterian minister of Coldstream. A more genial or a more generous spirit it has never been my lot to meet. He was benevolence incarnate. To look on him was to love him! To a fine and well-balanced intellect, he added an enthusiasm which steadily impelled him on through his whole life to deeds of piety and of patriotism. Amid all his toils and cares, disappointments and sorrows,—

for of these he had his share,—I never knew him dispirited. He always saw light beyond the cloud, sustaining his courage by resting on the promises of God. Every man, as we have already said, has his task and his mission ; and that of Dr. Thomson was to liberate the Holy Scriptures from the fetters which misguided authority had thrown around them. Dr. Thomson, by this great achievement, became the noblest benefactor to the Church of God that ever trod the soil of Britain. Had he given several millions sterling to the British and Foreign Bible Society to aid them in diffusing the sacred volume at the old monopoly prices, he would have done very little compared with what he actually accomplished. Such a contribution, notwithstanding its magnitude, would have had an end ; but, by reducing the price, he secured a permanent benefit. Had Dr. Thomson, like Cobden, liberated corn instead of truth,—food for the body instead of the soul,—he would have fared as did that great benefactor of his country ; but Dr. Thomson, instead of £80,000, or even £800, remained unpraised and unrewarded. His labours in the cause, and his establishment of printing offices, involved him in difficulties, and nothing was done for his extrication. He was soon after prostrated by paralysis, when an appeal was made to the public on his behalf ; but there was no response. His services were too great to be appreciated by the thoughtless masses, too spiritual to call forth the sympathy of formal professors. To no part of my life and labours do I look back with more intense and pure satisfaction, than I do to the peppercorn of aid I was permitted to render to this incomparable benefactor of his country and promoter of the cause of Christ. Nowhere do we find so striking an illustration of the touching words of Solomon : “ This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me : there was a little city, and few men within it ; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it : now there

was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man. Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard." ¹

A large concourse attended his funeral; and in the congregational service which preceded, his old friend, the Rev. James Stark of Ayton, gave a forcible and just sketch of his pastoral and public career. On the following Sabbath admirable discourses, bearing on the event, were delivered by the surviving pastor of the congregation, Mr. Mearns, and by Dr. Jack of Dunbar.

Dr. Thomson's death called forth no stronger testimonies to his achievements in the Bible cause than had been offered in his lifetime. The venerable Thomas Clarkson had warmly welcomed him into the brotherhood of 'great benefactors;' and the honour of having a place there was enhanced by being handed into it by the chief of living philanthropists. 'He, too,' wrote the champion of negro emancipation to the champion of Bible emancipation, 'who renders the Bible so cheap that it falls within the power of all to purchase it, whereby its circulation is promoted to a greater extent than before, is no less entitled to be ranked among the greatest benefactors of the human race. But *you* are particularly deserving of the public gratitude when we consider the case of the poor.' Dr.

¹ In a letter (Jan. 18th, 1867) to Dr. Thomson's eldest daughter, Mrs. Wilson, Dr. Campbell says of the above:—'Whatever be the value of the testimony, it is literally *one made upon oath*; it was the simple utterance of my heart, for I knew not that it would ever meet the eye of a single person bearing the honoured name of Dr. Thomson. This circumstance, I think, serves to enhance its utterance. I could not speak otherwise than I spoke of his eminent talents, noble character, and incomparable services.' Dr. Campbell goes on to express his 'gratification' at the announcement of a memoir of his friend, and generously volunteers, 'though he had renounced the broad-sheet,' to write a critical notice of the volume on its appearance. This was shortly before his sudden death.

Robert Vaughan, one of the brightest ornaments of English Nonconformity for the last thirty years, a man peculiarly endowed and trained for recognising genuine 'heroes,' either in the historic past or in the active present, thus expatiated on Dr. Thomson's work :—

‘I look not to the mistakes or acts of imprudence which a generous and noble-minded benefactor may commit ; and what man has not committed such who has determined to bless his race, and has succeeded in doing so? *I look to the general spirit of his enterprise*, and especially to its *grand results*, and judge accordingly of his merits, and of my obligations. Acting upon this principle, in respect of Dr. Thomson, I would be ashamed of myself, and of my fellow-Christians, if his high services were to be overlooked by any of us, because his entire procedure in the matter was not distinguished by the *perfection* of wisdom and prudence. Dr. Thomson has shown himself to be not one of those little-souled men who never think of doing any service to their fellow-creatures till they have, first of all, sat down and calculated that they shall be no losers. He determined on giving the Word of God at a cheap rate to the people ; he hurried to the rescue of the Bible from the monopolist and from the trade, neither of whom he could trust, and never thought of himself in the matter. The result is, he has carried his mighty object ; but in doing so, he has ruined himself and his family.’

In a kindred spirit, Dr. Halley, another leader among the English Independents, seized upon the prominent points and the ruling spirit in the Bible enterprise, and, contrasting the success of the work with what befel the agent, drew the following moral :—‘We have great need to take care lest we allow great public virtues to disappear altogether ; and if we do not take by the hand and generously reward such patriots as Dr. Thomson, we may soon have no such characters to distinguish and benefit our country.’ Often the greatest services

can have no pre-contract or bargain ; the agent himself may not see far before him as to the bearings and issues of his toil ; and the many that will at length be benefited are not only still more in the dark, but wholly apathetic, and the work goes on without any encouragement or pledge of reward ; but when important results have appeared, and the nation is reaping a harvest of advantages, is there to be no recompense because none was promised ?

Other influential clergymen, and very many of their less distinguished brethren, pronounced equally high eulogies ; but from clerical estimates we turn to those that come from a quarter where discrimination is supposed to have been made severely, inexorably keen, by professional experience and suspicion. We turn to a *Scotch lawyer on the bench*, who was noted not less for his shrewdness and insight than for his genial and generous qualities, Lord Murray, who also enjoyed special opportunities of forming a judgment on Dr. Thomson's services in behalf of free and cheap Bibles ; and out of several testimonies which at different times his Lordship gave, we select the following as explicit and impartial :—

. . . ‘I hope my absence will not be considered as arising from indifference to the subject in view, for I think that Dr. Thomson has the strongest possible claim upon all persons who are zealous for the diffusion of the Scriptures in the authorized version, and I hope that his case will receive the most favourable consideration from all his countrymen, and that his claims will be generously responded to by widely spread contributions from all classes throughout Scotland. I had occasion, when I was chairman of the committee which reported against the monopoly of printing the Scriptures in Scotland, to be fully acquainted with Dr. Thomson's extensive knowledge and great zeal in that cause. But his services were not confined to promoting the abolition of the monopoly which the committee reported against. It is well known that many

years often elapse after a patent or a tax has been put an end to before the public reap the full benefit of the change that has been made. Dr. Thomson seems to have felt this strongly, and he embarked everything he had in an undertaking for printing Bibles at a press which he established at his residence at Coldstream. His success in the reduction in the price of Bibles, which many persons asserted would not take place although the monopoly was put an end to, has been wonderful. According to the statement made in his letter to the Right Hon. Lord Bexley, president of the British and Foreign Bible Society, taking the two Bibles most in demand in the country, the pocket Bible, which cost 5s. a copy, or £250,000 per million, may be had now at 10d. a copy, or £41,666, 13s. 4d. per million copies, making a saving to the public of £208,333, 6s. 8d. on every million. Again, the pocket Testament, which formerly cost 3s. a copy, or £150,000 per million, may be had now at 5d. a copy, or £20,833, 6s. 8d. per million, making a saving to the public of £129,166, 13s. 4d. These two savings amount together to £337,500.

‘If Dr. Thomson had been a person of unbounded wealth, and had given £300,000 towards the distribution of the Scriptures, he would surely have had a strong claim upon men of zealous religious feelings; but he did what was much better for the subject he had in view than any gratuitous distribution would have accomplished, for he has put it in the power of every one, by the smallest exertion of industry, to purchase the Scriptures for himself. A person would surely value the sacred volume which he had acquired through his own efforts more than if he owed it to the alms of another.

‘I have heard only two things said against Dr. Thomson. It is said he was very imprudent in establishing the Free Press at Coldstream. I suppose it will be very difficult to free him from that imputation. Dr. Thomson was indefatigable, zealous, enthusiastic, and devoted to the object he had in view, but he

was not prudent. Few persons who devote themselves to one object, and are zealous and enthusiastic, are prudent men ; they succeed in the one object, and their success is usually greater than any person could anticipate beforehand, but they fail in matters where very inferior persons would not have miscarried. Another insinuation, and the opposite of this, has been made against Dr. Thomson, that he established the Free Press at Coldstream with the view of benefiting himself. I consider this a most unjust and unfounded statement, peculiarly cruel and unfeeling towards a person who has ruined himself and his family by his zeal and enthusiasm. If Dr. Thomson had directed his attention to what was to be profitable to himself, he would probably have succeeded, but he would not have reduced the price of the Scriptures as rapidly and as much as he did. By thinking of nothing but the object he had in view, he attained it, but he has ruined himself and his family.

‘ It is for the meeting over which your Lordship is to preside, and for other similar meetings, to say whether they will afford a suitable testimonial to a person who has ruined himself and his family by great and successful efforts in promoting the circulation of the Scriptures. I enclose my mite towards the testimonial, and I remain, your Lordship’s very humble servant,

JOHN A. MURRAY.

*‘ To the Right Honourable
the Lord Provost, Edinburgh.’*

We have a peculiar satisfaction in laying before our readers the following reminiscences that have been kindly furnished by two of Dr. Thomson’s brethren, one of whom—Dr. Jack of Dunbar—knew him intimately during all but the first ten years of his ministry, and the other—Dr. Cairns of Berwick—was brought, as a co-presbyter, into close association with him for the last fifteen years of his life. Those contributions are too valuable, and their authors too well known, to require any

introduction. We may, however, mention that Dr. Jack, who had taken a deep interest in this memoir of his friend, was, when in full possession of his high and admirably-balanced mental faculties (though he had for some time been laid aside from ministerial toil by physical disabilities), suddenly seized with an illness which proved fatal, before the tribute to Dr. Thomson which he had so readily, yet with all his elaborate elegance, prepared, could be returned to him in print.¹ It is but proper to explain that this tribute by Dr. Jack is not the biographical sketch which he read to the Coldstream congregation at the close of his funeral discourse for Dr. Thomson. What is here published is wholly new, and was written after the lapse of some years, when he was residing in Musselburgh, where his animated and graphic conversations about the great preachers he had heard, especially in Lancashire, moved not a few visitors to wish that he could be prevailed on to give a more lasting record of his impressions and recollections. His memory was full of clerical portraits that had been traced and retouched in his moods of admiration ; but death has shut up that 'chamber of imagery.' At the funeral services in presence of the Dunbar congregation, the minister, who gave an impressive account of Dr. Jack's pastoral labours, was Dr. Thomson's colleague and successor, Mr. Mearns.

'It was shortly after he was ordained to the office of the Christian ministry in Coldstream that I first became acquainted with the late Rev. Dr. Adam Thomson. On my being introduced to him, he invited me to his house ; and never shall I forget the cordial greeting with which he bade me welcome to his hospitable dwelling. But though I have, and shall always have, a grateful recollection of the kindness he then showed

¹ Dr. Jack's penmanship, down to the last, was as legible and beautiful as any print, and was in keeping with the exquisite art and taste of his literary composition.

me, I was at that time too young to be capable of duly appreciating his worth, as it regards his ability for the discharge of the duties of the office with which he had been recently invested. Having, however, subsequent to my own ordination, frequent ministerial intercourse with him, and consequently numerous opportunities of observing how he conducted the services of the pulpit, I was led to estimate highly his talents and his qualifications for sustaining and executing efficiently the office of a public religious instructor.

‘ At the period referred to he was, what he long continued to be, exceedingly popular—great crowds assembling wherever it was known he was to officiate. The attraction of his preaching did not consist in his promulgating doctrines novel in their character, nor in his declaiming on matters of minor, to the exclusion of those of essential, moment, nor in his seeking to please the ear or the fancy, regardless of the profit of the mind. On no occasion were these the features that distinguished his preaching, and that rendered it so acceptable. So far from this, the substantial divinity, for the dissemination of which our denominational forefathers were famed, was that on which—though in more polished phrase than theirs—he delighted to expatiate. His theme, his great theme, was the *truth*—the *whole* truth, and *nothing* but the truth as it is in Jesus, in all its bearings and in all its tendencies—in its spiritually enlightening, and morally transforming, and peculiarly consoling power. Finding that truth, more or less, in every text he selected for discussion,—to that portion of it which his text suggested he strictly adhered in the delivery of his discourses,—branching it out through the medium of a felicitous methodical arrangement, and blending his illustrations of it with the most apposite quotations from Scripture, and enforcing its personal application by an appeal to motives which none could with impunity resist; while the tone of his voice, as he did so, thrilled with a pathos that indicated anxious solici-

tude that his audience should, like himself, experimentally feel the importance and the necessity of giving a believing and practical reception to what he said.

‘But not only was he celebrated as a preacher—he *excelled* in prayer as well as in preaching. Of him it could not be affirmed that, singularly attractive as his preaching was, there was nothing remarkable or uncommon about his prayers. It was the very opposite. As he preached, so he prayed. He did both well—the latter no less than the former, and that in no ordinary degree. Nor is it difficult to divine the cause of which this, in his case, was the effect. With him prayer was not a formality, the mere visible assumption of a devotional posture, nor the mere verbal utterance of devotional expression; but prayer in all its *genuineness*—reverent, humble, penitential, earnest prayer—extemporaneously, unhesitatingly, fluently, yet gravely, solemnly poured forth, affording unmistakeable evidence that he cherished the spirit and cultivated the habit, as the result of his having had conferred upon him the gift and the grace of prayer. Nay more, when he prayed in the sanctuary or at the domestic altar, not only was his manner of praying fitted to produce the impression that he was pre-eminently a man of prayer, but so accordant with the felt spiritual wants of humanity were the petitions he was wont to offer up,—not with the boldness of presumption, but with the boldness of faith and hope,—that those in whose presence he prayed became irresistibly conscious of an inclination not only to pray along with him, but, by an appropriation of his prayer, by making it their own, to pray as he did. In being thus instrumental in inducing others by his prayers sincerely to unite with him in prayer, he may have been equalled by some, but by none has he ever been surpassed.

‘Useful as he was by his preaching and his prayerfulness, he was no less so as a member of our synodical court, at the meetings of which he was a punctual and regular attendant.

For this he was noted, and equally so for the zealous part he took in everything in which that court felt interested, or in which its interests were concerned. Endowed with a sound judgment, his opinion was often asked, and often found to be serviceable in bringing about harmony, on subjects respecting which discordance of sentiment had prevailed. Characterized by great readiness of speech, he needed no prompting what to say, when questions having reference to schemes of finance or education or missionary enterprise arose, but of his own accord, and with all promptitude, stated what he considered would conduce to their advantageous settlement ; and, by the judiciousness of his counsel or advice, frequently succeeded in having plans devised, promotive of those schemes which, when wrought out, were productive of benefit. Favoured physically with a healthy frame, and being proof against the fatigue that would have made many succumb, he was in his element when, at the bidding of his ecclesiastical superiors, he journeyed far and near to aid by his exertions in consolidating the existing spheres, or in widening the boundaries of that “kingdom which is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” For active usefulness in its service, other members of our Synod may have acquired celebrity ; but their claim to it on this score cannot be said to be stronger than his.

‘It was not left by him to be conjectured what that *Church* was of which he approved, and which, on this account, he preferred. Being a Presbyterian from conviction, to the Presbyterian—originally designated the Secession, but now called the United Presbyterian Church—he was ardently attached. Its extension throughout the land, the numerical increase of its congregations, and the well-being of its adherents, he sought, and put forth his every energy to effect. But though it was the Church of his choice, and though he was solicitous that it should progress, and improve, and prosper, because

that, in his view, which had the most warrant from Scripture, yet he was no *bigot*; his sectarianism was not exclusive. As he had reached the conclusion at which he had arrived respecting Church attachment in consequence of his having carefully and deliberately examined the subject, so, with all frankness and with all sincerity, he gave those credit for conscientiousness who had in a similar way attached themselves to the Church of which they were members. Lover, then, as he was, of his own Church and party, he was also a "lover of all good men" of any Church and party whom he had reason to infer belonged to the brotherhood of Christianity; and, without mental reservation, he could, and did, so far as their best interests were concerned, bid them God speed. Indeed, a heart more catholic in its sympathies and wishes than that which beat in his bosom it would not be easy to find.

'To this, exception cannot consistently be taken, as being rendered open to objection or susceptible of contradiction, by his procedure in what was termed the *Voluntary controversy*. It is not to be denied that, when engaged in that controversy, he sometimes spoke, and frequently wrote, as if those to whom he was opposed had no place in his affectionate regards, so satirical, and sarcastic, and scathing was his language. But if tested by impartial discrimination, what, in reality, was the motive by which he was actuated in using such a style of address as that to which occasionally he had recourse? Was it because he had no love for his opponents? The very reverse. That which he disliked was not *them*, but the *system* of which they were the abettors. For the alliance of the Church with the State, which they advocated and defended, involving, as that alliance does, State control over the Church, he had no tolerance, so repugnant was it to every notion he had been taught to entertain by his readings of Scripture. The disruption of that alliance, and the discontinuance of that control, and the consequent emancipation of the Church

from both, by which, in his opinion, it was dishonoured and degraded, he therefore desiderated, deeming no argument, compatible with fair and consecutive and cogent reasoning, as unlawful to employ in order that it might be realized. As he had for his aim the upholding of *His* glory, who, by divine and mediatorial right, is the sole *Head* of the Church, and whose sovereign and inalienable prerogative it is to legislate respecting the constitution of the Church, and the form of its administration, and the mode of its worship, and the principles of its discipline, and the means of its support ; so, by his manner of reasoning with those with whom he contended,—however displeasing to them at any time that reasoning might be,—he was solicitous that they should, with a view to their welfare here and hereafter, have this conviction lodged in their minds, that not more earnestly desirous was he that they should believe in *Christ on the cross* as the Church's only Saviour, than he was that *Christ on the throne*, as the Church's supreme Ruler, should be recognised by them, and not only recognised, but acknowledged and obeyed.

‘ It may be thought that those things to which allusion has been made were enough for him to attend to, without his occupying himself with anything else. But he could not be idle whilst anything required to be done, by the doing of which others might be bettered, and which he was persuaded he was called upon in providence to do. It is because this was his disposition that, amidst all his other [avocations, he gave himself heartily, and strenuously, and perseveringly to *that* which, raising him to the rank of a *benefactor*, is calculated—deserving as he is in other respects to be remembered—to endear his memory. Aware that the *Bible*, man's guide to immortality, was, in point of price, beyond the purchase of a large class of the community, owing to its printing and publishing being in the hands of monopolists, he determined that this monopoly should be abolished ; that of their right in

the Bible, which, as an exclusive right, they had long held, and which, by the constituted authorities, they had been sanctioned in holding, they should be deprived ; that of their possession of that right, which, operating as it did as a hindrance to an extensive circulation of the Bible, reflected disgrace on the age, they should also be deprived ; and that, in consequence of the Bible being taken from under their control, and cheapened in price, and rendered purchasable by the poor as well as by the rich, by being thrown, as an article of merchandise, into the free trade market, a *new era* in this respect, and fraught with blessing in time and throughout eternity, should be inaugurated. For this he pleaded — indefatigably, energetically pleaded — on the platform, and by correspondence, and from the press ; and ceased not his pleading until it was crowned with success. Being then, as he was, through God's help, *the abolitionist of the Bible monopoly*, to him, as God's agent in the accomplishment of its abolition, thanks, in no small measure, are due.

‘ But though he be justly entitled to the praise that has been bestowed upon him, let it not be supposed that he had no failings. Such an idea he himself would have indignantly repudiated. Blamelessness was not his attainment any more than it is that of any, however much they may be looked upon by their fellow-creatures as free from blame ; “ for what are the best of men, but men at the best ? ”

‘ Believing him to be *now* where *He* is whose righteousness was his plea and whose blood was his refuge, it cannot fail to be a source of comfort to the relations and friends he has left behind, to think that on him, in association with the pious departed, this benediction has been, and is still pronounced : “ Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours ; and their works do follow them.” ’

Dr Cairns has favoured us with the following recollections

and impressions. These will excite a regret that the middle and more vigorous and fruitful portion of Dr. Thomson's ministerial life had not come closely under the eye of *such* an observer:—

‘I willingly comply with the request made to me to contribute some recollections of my late venerable friend, the Rev. Dr. Thomson of Coldstream. My acquaintance with him, indeed, was confined to his later years. I had repeatedly heard him preach in Stockbridge and other congregations in the Presbytery before I became a minister; but my first personal intercourse with him was in 1845, when I was settled in Berwick. From that date, however, till his death in 1861, I enjoyed his cordial friendship, and saw so much of him at meetings of Presbytery, in occasional visits, and through other forms of ministerial communion, such as at the dispensation of the Lord's Supper, that I may speak of him with some degree of confidence. In the beginning of this period he had lost little or nothing of his youthful fire; and till his heavy trials came in connection with the Bible printing scheme, followed speedily by his own bodily infirmities, he may be said to have been in the full youth of his vigour, prosperity, and usefulness.

‘It is not much that I can contribute in the way of incident, for the public events of this period will have been far better narrated in their connection, and I cannot recall much of a private or personal nature that claims to be recorded. When I look back on these days, there stands out in the midst of them the same unvarying figure, with the venerable grey hairs and piercing eye; bright, animated, and overflowing with Scripture in the pulpit; prominent, rapid, and decisive in the Presbytery room; but in the parlour subdued, confiding, and loving to talk and to be talked to of other days. To this general impression I can only contribute some random incident or feature that happens to leave a deeper trace.

‘The first time that I heard him preach after my settlement—indeed the first time that I heard him with anything like an educated ear—was at his own communion in Coldstream somewhere about 1846. He preached to his large and attentive congregation with great fervour on the privileges of believers as the sons of God. The summer sun shone in at the windows and lighted up his impassioned figure. I was struck then, as always, with the gracefulness of his gesture, which was quite equal to its abounding energy. One passage I vividly remember, where he appealed to his congregation, and asked which of them all could look at some rich estate or splendid mansion in the surrounding landscape and call it their own, at the same time contrasting their coveted possessions with the certain inheritance of all the children of God. The audience seemed transfixed by this appeal; and the whole peroration was in the same key, being a fine example of his best manner.

‘He did not always rise so high; but I never heard him without a good division, sound doctrine of the old school, flanked and relieved by Scripture, and a vital warmth and unction which kindled the whole into life. He was particularly happy in his addresses at the Lord’s table, which were wholly extemporaneous, and often prompted by something in the verses sung, according to the ancient fashion, as the communicants were coming to, or going from the tables. I remember on one occasion, in distributing the bread, after repeating the words, “Take eat, this is my body, which is broken for you,” he broke out into these exclamations, “Wonderful, communicants, that the Son of God should have had a body! more wonderful that it should have been broken! most wonderful of all, you will admit, that it should have been broken *for you!*” At another time, in speaking of the blessedness of heaven, he said, with great energy, “But I cannot describe it; I bless God that I cannot describe it; for could I describe it, it would not be heaven!” I cannot recall a more

natural style of table address, equally free from didactic dryness and from everything overwrought either in fancy or feeling.

‘His readiness in the pulpit was quite as great ; but I never happened to be a witness of it. I was, indeed, on one occasion the instrument of depriving myself of that satisfaction. This was at the ordination of the Rev. Mr. Montgomery at Ayton, in the autumn of 1846. The day was memorable for the tremendous flood which swept away the bridges on the newly opened North British line of railway. In this flood Dr. Thomson’s future colleague, the Rev. Mr. Mearns, who was to be ordained at Coldstream on the day following, nearly lost his life, one bridge falling near Linton just after the train in which he was travelling from Edinburgh had crossed, and another near Dunbar giving way immediately before it came up. The members of Presbytery arrived at Ayton in a very irregular fashion ; and the brother who was to preach the ordination sermon did not get forward at all. I was fortunate enough to be taken out through the torrent by the kindness of a legal gentleman from Edinburgh, along with Mr. Ker, then of Alnwick, in a carriage, and reached the house of Mr Stark at Ayton, where the Presbytery met, to find them in great perplexity as to the conduct of the service. Dr. Thomson, who had arrived before, had been already relegated to a separate room, to collect his thoughts in case of extremities, the appearance of the preacher of the day being now regarded as all but hopeless. As I was to preach, however, on the day following at Coldstream, it was suggested on my arrival,—I forget whether by some other or by myself,—and then agreed to, that I should now stand in the gap ; and I was appointed to convey this message to Dr. Thomson. I found him in a corner of his room with an open Bible before him, and with a look of deep abstraction not unmingled with uneasiness upon his face. His relief was great ; but I now regret that I had not the opportunity of seeing how, in such an emergency, his faculties would

have risen to their full compass. The other scenes of that day are vividly before me. The great crowd in the church, as of birds driven in by the rain for shelter ; the impressive charge to the young minister by Mr. Ker, one of his most solemn appearances ; our long walk together back to Berwick, all other communication having broken down, over a high-road that had been washed as dry and hard as a pavement ; our amazement, amounting to awe and almost consternation, as from the Bankhill we caught, in the failing light, our first view of the Tweed in red flood, roaring and sweeping down in a style which has never been exceeded in the memory of man. I should have liked much to have connected a purely extempore sermon by Dr. Thomson with the other reminiscences of that singular occasion. Of the following service I recollect little beyond the fervour of the ordination prayer, offered up by him for his colleague, and the look of cordiality and cheerfulness which he wore the whole day.

‘I have spoken of his manner in the Presbytery ; but I can recall no one incident that is more characteristic than another. My most interesting recollections are of his manner and bearing in his own house on the Presbytery days, before the business began and after it ended. The seat of the Presbytery was then alternately at Coldstream, where it continued to be till the Relief union in 1847, when several of our brethren went off to form the Presbytery of Kelso, and the rest were formed into a new Presbytery, meeting always at Berwick. Though the change was much more convenient to myself, I never ceased to regret the happy days that were thus brought to an end. Every meeting at Coldstream was a perfect holiday, with all the interest of travel and the pleasure of seeing friends, joined to the satisfaction of sacred and conscientious labour. My late friend, Mr. Peden, clerk of the Presbytery, and myself, with Mr. John Young of Berwick, who acted as our charioteer, used to start early in the morning, and, driving up the romantic

banks of the Tweed, through scenery rich alike in natural and historical association, past Norham, Twisel Bridge, and Cornhill, we reached Coldstream long before the business began, and spent the interval in the society of Dr. Thomson and his family. Here the whole Presbytery, by and by, under the like attraction, came together, before repairing to his session-house, which was the place of meeting. The rapid despatch of business frequently allowed a still longer time than in the morning—sometimes an hour or two—to be spent in the same hospitable dwelling in the afternoon, where all the Presbytery adjourned, after dinner in the inn, to tea. I have never in my whole life seen a finer exemplification of Christian hospitality and courtesy than was furnished by Dr. Thomson, Mrs. Thomson, and the whole of the family, at such times. His delight in the society of his brethren was visible and unrestrained; and the whole household shared it with him, and contributed to the charm of intelligence and kindness, of which every one felt the influence. The cordial greetings, the genial pleasantries, the hearty discussions of these days, will not soon be forgotten, nor those who took part in them. I will pass over the living,—and long may they live,—and not attempt to say how much the presence of Mr. Stark of Ayton, Mr. Inglis of Stockbridge, Mr. Renton of Kelso, and others, lighted up these scenes. But I may recall, among the departed, the winning look and mild wisdom of Mr. Lee of Horndean, the shrewd simplicity of Mr. Hume of Yetholm, the massive kindliness of Mr. Smart of Chirnside, and the honest sense and goodness of Mr. Peden. Among all these, and others who were more rarely present, Dr. Thomson shone second to none, and with a certain pre-eminence which grew out of his more prominent public character, and which his entire forgetfulness of this in his own home could not altogether conceal. I do not think he was ever happier in his life than amidst such gatherings; and the memory of them will not fade, though so

many sad changes have left but few who retain their living impression.

‘None of my recollections of Dr. Thomson are more pleasant than in his purely domestic character, when I had the happiness, in assisting at his communion, or at some similar service, to pass a day or two with himself alone, in the bosom of his family. The genial kindness and warmth of his nature then came out in the fullest manner, while the simplicity, seriousness, and unction of his family prayers were more than usually striking. His stores of anecdote were then also freely drawn upon, and he had much to tell of the public men he had encountered in his busy and moving life, and of the ecclesiastical leaders and characters of a former generation. I cannot pretend to recall more than fragments of these recitals and descriptions; but it was characteristic of him to go far back, and to dwell with greatest interest upon men long vanished. Of these various historical figures I may mention the following.

‘At different times I have heard him speak of his visit to Leceister, where he heard and I think also preached for Robert Hall. Mr Hall’s morning sermon was but ordinary; but the evening one, which discussed and advocated the restoration of the Jews to their own land, was of surprising eloquence. He was also fond of speaking of Dr Waugh, whom he had known intimately, and for whom he had often preached in Wells Street. As a specimen of Dr. Waugh’s humour, he used to mention this incident. Dr. Waugh knew well how free his visitor was from any high-flown Presbyterianism, having, like himself, from abundant intercourse with southern Christians, imbibed those moderate opinions on Church government which he afterwards expressed in his *Comparative View of English and Scottish Dissenters*. It happened that Dr. Thomson was to sit in London for a portrait, and Dr. Waugh accompanied him to the artist. “Every man,” says he, introducing his friend, “is best taken when his passions are roused, and if

you wish to set this gentleman on fire, be sure to attack the divine right of Presbytery."

'But of all these memories the most cherished was that of his old professor, Dr. Lawson, whose confidential friendship he had enjoyed, and for whom, as is well known, he had preached a funeral sermon, which is not only by far the best brief account of that remarkable man, but one of the best specimens of a funeral sermon anywhere to be found. The mention of Dr. Lawson's name never failed to act like a charm. One affecting proof of this I remember. On the last occasion I preached in his pulpit before his death he had been very feeble and depressed all day, and hardly able, from his disease, to articulate one connected sentence. The conversation turned at the supper-table on his Hall days, and on Dr. Lawson. He speedily revived, and gradually not only took part in the talk, but repeated some anecdotes of his venerable tutor which I had never heard him tell before. One was, that, on his first entrance to the Hall, Dr. Lawson practised on him an experiment which seems to have been common with him, of repeating a student's name and then a chapter and verse anywhere in the Bible, leaving the student, if he could, to fill in the quotation. The new-comer was not a little startled to hear himself saluted before the class, "Adam Thomson, Micah vi. 8," but, fortunately, was able to reply, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good," etc. He also mentioned at this time that Dr. Lawson, on an early visit paid him at Coldstream after his ordination, in looking through his library, struck with his foot the lower or folio range, which was then but scantily filled up, and said, "Adam, you have too few books here."

'His reverence for Dr. Lawson was known to all his friends, and sometimes appealed to publicly. I mention the following incident the rather, which I heard from a friend, now deceased, who was present, since it supplies a fresh anecdote of Dr. Lawson. One day, in the Presbytery of Coldstream and

Berwick, some student had uttered a sentiment which Dr. Thomson felt disposed to challenge as abating the doctrine of human depravity. Dr. Balmer, who was then alive, took a more lenient view, and regarded it as a strong, perhaps exaggerated expression of the view held by many, if not most Calvinists, that man has the power to obey, but wants the will—in other words, is not the victim of physical but of moral inability. There is no likelihood that Dr. Thomson had denied the distinction, but Dr. Balmer thought that the best way of propitiating him towards the inculcated student was to invoke the memory of Dr. Lawson, who, he said, had taught the doctrine thus: “A man at the foot of a high building calls to another at the top, ‘Jump down, sir!’ to which he replies, ‘I cannot.’ They then change places, and the man at the top cries out, ‘Jump up, sir!’ to which he makes the same reply, ‘I cannot.’ ‘Who does not see,’ Dr. Lawson used to add, ‘that the one *cannot* is not the same with the other, and that the position of the sinner is more like the former than the latter of these cases?’” This appeal prevailed, and the student, whether in fault or not, was allowed to pass muster.

“These reminiscences of Dr. Thomson are but specimens of others which might be given were it necessary. I could mention how well he sustained his Bible-printing disappointments, how full he was of cheerfulness after his disabling illness, and how calmly and tranquilly he bore his last years of inaction and waited for his release. I recall these things with a feeling of personal edification and gratitude, thankful that, while he shared the common lot of ministers to have the volume of their light diminished with age, there was no abatement of its quality, but rather an improvement to the last. It will always be to me a happy recollection that I enjoyed so much of his friendship; and I sincerely pray that in scriptural knowledge, in faithful preaching, in public spirit, and in the union of the kindlier with the robuster virtues of the Christian

character, he may never want successors in his own or in any other section of the Church of Christ.'

In reference to a general belief, among his ministerial brethren and their congregations, that Dr. Thomson had a peculiar facility for preaching—not only decently, but with striking effect—in sudden emergencies which allowed him no time for preparation, it is but fair to say that he never presumed upon that facility, or entered the pulpit without having carefully premeditated his discourse, unless in circumstances which imposed the necessity of preaching, after having denied him the opportunity of previous study. Had he, at any time, gone into the pulpit unprepared, whilst he had both known of the engagement and enjoyed ample leisure for study, the memory of wasted hours and days would have clogged and paralysed his energies, and he would have failed miserably, and deservedly ; but on every occasion of his preaching *extempore* he was free from such self-accusations, and he produced a most impressive discourse. Once, after he had announced his text, 'Behold, I bring unto you tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people,' and had gone through a few introductory sentences, he suddenly remembered that he had recently preached a missionary sermon from that text to another congregation in the same town, and he saw that many of his former hearers were present. He at once decided upon pursuing a new train of ideas, and said, 'Some of you will probably remember that I lately preached in another place of worship from this text. My object was then to speak of those tidings of joy as *sent to all people* ; but I shall now consider the nature of the message itself—the *good tidings*, etc.' Scotch hearers have a strong and rather unreasonable dislike to listen a second time to the same sermon, even though they greatly admire it, and have almost forgotten it ; and the preacher, knowing this characteristic, gave them a new discourse.

In Scotland, communion table addresses were often full of

pure and impassioned eloquence ; and we have heard not a few ministers, in those services, speak with an inspiration which was absent from their preaching all the year round. When they stood up on the steps of the pulpit stair, and surveyed the solemn faces of young and old in the central seats allotted to the 'Lord's guests,' and as soon as the opening words, 'Intending Communicants !' passed their lips, they seemed to become new men, and for a few minutes they were orators indeed. Those brethren who were naturally eloquent, then became so in a high degree, and none more so than Dr. Thomson. His table addresses were much and widely spoken of—sometimes for little incidents which conspired to render the train of his ideas still more memorable. Before the introduction of 'simultaneous communion,' the congregation received the ordinance in successive companies that sat down in a part of the church reserved for them. At times the company that came last was small, consisting of but a few members. On one occasion, when Dr. Thomson was about to 'serve' the last 'table,' only a single communicant appeared ; and the Doctor proceeded to take, as the motto of his table address, the words of Christ to the Samaritan leper, 'Were there not *ten* cleansed, but where are the *nine* ?' He was descanting on the assurance that the welcome to a grateful, cleansed sinner would never be withheld by Christ, even though that sinner came singly,—when another person took his seat at the communion table. The speaker at once added, 'When Esau came to ask the blessing from his father, he found that Jacob had been beforehand, and he could not obtain it, though he sought it earnestly with tears, exclaiming, "Hast thou not a blessing for me, even for me also, O my father ?" But Isaac could only lament that he was powerless either to recall the one blessing, or to add another. It is not so, my brethren, in our Father's house. There is bread enough and to spare, and the choicest blessings, for all His children !'

His extensive and minute knowledge of Scripture—the old Testament as well as the new—was ever at command for unexpected yet felicitous application to the circumstances of his hearers; and never more so than when he was delivering a ‘table address.’ He was not slow in approving of *simultaneous communion*, as not only simpler and more orderly, but in closer accordance with the primitive model; yet around the Presbyterian method of successive companies of communicants and table addresses he had many cherished associations; and the scene came vividly back whenever he heard the simple tune of *Coleshill*, which was invariably sung in all the intervals between the table services, and which regulated the praises of communicants both when approaching and when leaving the table of the Lord. There might, in the passages of the church, be observed something of a tumult, from the different companies taking and quitting their seats; but the discomposure caused was but transient, and the stillness which succeeded might, both to the communicants and to the spectators, be more grateful through the contrast. Though, too, he admitted that the ‘preaching days’ in connection with the communion in Scotland were of merely human appointment, and might have encumbered the simplicity of the divine ordinance of the Supper, and directly prevented its frequent observance, he yet recognised a *fine genius* in the very devising of those peculiar days—‘fasting’ and ‘preparation’ days coming before, and a ‘thanksgiving’ day coming after, the sacrament; nor did he doubt that, in the experience of many, they had been blessed as a ‘week of Sabbaths;’ whilst to himself and his ministerial brethren they had been seasons of exquisite delight, giving to the solitary labourer and ‘watchman’ the choicest fellowship. It was his characteristic, however, even in old age, promptly to adopt new improvements, when these confined themselves to purely human arrangements, and did not innovate upon a divine law or a scriptural pattern.

We shall not venture to speak of the fruits, far less to number the 'seals' of his fifty-four years' ministry in his native place. He had a strong and steady trust in the divine blessing upon faithful preaching ; and though it was trust and not sight, yet he was not without cheering proofs, at the various stages of his course, that he did not 'labour in vain.' His attendance at death-beds had often disclosed to him the power of the gospel, whispered even in a few simple words ; and his ministrations in the house of mourning inspired resignation and peace long before 'Time' could have cured the grief.

Seldom has a labourer, with such a persevering and engrossing mood, and such an indomitable will, as Dr. Thomson displayed, been distinguished by his exceeding geniality, contentment, and humility. The manliness of his character was associated with a rare gentleness and amiability ; and strangers could not fail to notice in his looks and tones the expression of those blended qualities. Children divined at once that he had something more than tolerance for them, and they were without suspicion, shyness, or restraint in his presence. Nor was this aspect of captivating good nature put on to please outer circles and the public eye. He wore it always in his own family ; and his wife, children, and domestics never saw the sullen or chilling reverse. He had, indeed, a happy home, and loving hearts around him ; but he gave, as freely as he received, affection and delight. Nor was there anything in his domestic demeanour and life to discredit the sincerity or to weaken the influence of his ministerial testimony and teaching, though the everyday of home turns many microscopic eyes upon a man's religion. What, in the pulpit, was his chief concern for himself and his people, continued, in the home circle, to attract his paramount regard for himself and his family. His deep earnestness, when before the congregation, about the 'one thing needful,' had no such contrast as a levity about it when he moved among his children. His family devotions

were observed as punctually and reverently as his congregational ; and invariably in the morning before breakfast, and in the evening before supper, he engaged, along with his household, in the reading of God's Word, praise, and prayer. Nor was it a merely routine exercise, for he put his whole heart into it, and his way of conducting it made it ever fresh and new to young and old. As long as there were juvenile worshippers, either his own children, or the English boys who were boarded in the manse for their education, he required these, at morning prayers, daily to repeat from memory a short passage of Scripture, which he then explained ; and in this way they more than once went through the *Scripture Selections* published by Dr. William Brown—an excellent compendium of Bible doctrine. When this little work had been mastered, he took them through the Shorter Catechism, seeking to render its masculine theology plain and interesting to their opening minds. He was strongly of opinion that family worship, especially where children were present, should be a brief service ; and he never permitted the various exercises, including the supplementary ones for instructing the young, to occupy more than a quarter of an hour. Mrs. Thomson's admirable household management was in perfect harmony with her husband's arrangements, and neither young nor old had to sit long after prayers were over, yawning painfully for the appearance of breakfast. Careful as he was to prevent family worship from being tedious even to the youngest, he was not less anxious that Sabbath keeping should never become to any of his children a 'weariness' or a penance. His aim was that they should 'hallow' the Lord's day, and at the same time feel it to be the happiest day in the week ; and none of the many visitors at the Coldstream manse, who happened to remain over the Sabbath, could have any doubt about the realization of his aim. On that day he was, at the breakfast-table, unusually silent, his thoughts being engrossed with the themes on which

he was to preach ; whilst the younger members spoke little, and spoke in whispers, lest they might disturb his studious mood ; but there was no expression of austerity on his face, nor did the other faces indicate painful restraint or gloomy monotony. How delightfully, profitably, and religiously the evening, after his three public services, was spent, the now far-scattered members of that privileged family will ever fondly remember ; and the survivors among the many ministers who witnessed the scene of domestic piety and Sabbath sanctification, may sometimes recall it as a proof that former days have not left it to our times to discover that Sabbath keeping does not make men morose, or home gloomy !

In closing this imperfect account of Dr. Thomson's long and laborious life, we are not called to attempt a sketch of his character, as this has been repeatedly indicated in the course of the narrative, and is transparent in his words and deeds,—a quick and strong intellect, regulated by a sound judgment, a delicate taste, and a tender conscience, sustained in constant energy and persevering action by a will that rose above all difficulties and would yield to no sloth, and impelled by an unselfish spirit and generous sensibilities, which had been enlarged and purified by Christian love. With that intellect he 'served his generation ;' and through his exertions in the cause of free and cheap Bibles, he has done good far beyond both his proper sphere and his eighty-second year. This one achievement might be the first to 'follow' him into that world where, for faithful service, there are glorious rewards, though these, like the simple admission, are wholly 'of grace ;' but it will also be the last to be forgotten on earth, and here it will long keep his memory green,—his special associations with the Bible giving to that memory something of the Bible's perpetual freshness.

APPENDIX.

[The following document was accidentally omitted :—]

ADDRESS TO DR. THOMSON ON THE OCCASION OF PRESENTING THE TESTIMONIAL.

‘EDINBURGH, *April* 1851.

‘TO THE REV. ADAM THOMSON, D.D.,
‘COLDSTREAM.

‘REV. AND DEAR SIR,—We, the chairman, secretaries, treasurers, and other members of the three committees in Scotland, who have superintended the movement for a Testimonial to you on account of your great and successful exertions, first, in effecting the abolition of the Bible monopoly in Scotland, and afterwards in securing to the country the cheapening of the Word of God, which has led to the present marvellous demand for the Scriptures all over the United Kingdom, beg leave, in the name of the numerous subscribers to the Testimonial in England, Scotland, and Ireland, to express towards you our high admiration, and our most sincere respect and gratitude.

‘You have done a great work in your day,—a work which, even in your own lifetime, you have seen bring forth the most precious blessings to mankind ; and a work which is destined to effect for the Church of the living God, and the country at large, an amount of good which shall descend to remote generations.

‘The Great King and Head of the Church has highly honoured you in selecting you to become the instrument in accomplishing this mighty boon, and we are persuaded that your reward shall be great in the kingdom of heaven. We know that your motive in the whole of your procedure in this matter has been alike honourable to your Christian character and your disinterested benevolence ; and while, in common with all your friends, we regret that your sacrifices in this cause have been so ruinous to your own and your family’s temporal interests, we are, notwithstanding, convinced that you have not regretted the steps by which Divine Providence has conducted you, or the results, though so painful and disastrous.

We admire your indomitable perseverance in the face of so many difficulties and discouragements, and award to you the credit due alike to your faith, your generosity, and your courage. It cannot fail to be a source of much satisfaction to yourself that, through your exertions mainly, one of the greatest benefactions of the age has been accomplished for the Church and the world. You may not at present receive all the credit which is your due ; but we entertain the conviction that your memory will be blessed by coming generations, and that when the invading forces of Popery, infidelity, and immorality threaten to overwhelm the cause of truth and righteousness, and when the dependence of the friends of that cause shall be found to be alone upon the multiplication of Bibles throughout the community, then shall be seen and acknowledged the magnitude and the importance of your self-sacrificing labours as the emancipator and cheapener of God's "wonderful testimonies."

'We beg leave also to express our sincere sympathy with you in your present affliction, to a great extent brought on and aggravated by your wonderful exertions, and their inseparable anxieties, in the cause of Bible emancipation and circulation. And it is our sincere prayer that the Lord, whom you have so long and so faithfully served, may be pleased to grant you a reviving, and still to spare you for a comfort to your family, and friends, and people.

'And, in conclusion, we have now to inform you that, as the result of the Testimonial movement, a sum of upwards of three thousand pounds sterling has been contributed as a small mark of the gratitude and esteem of the subscribers, which sum it is the intention of the committees legally and safely to invest, in the names of trustees to be afterwards appointed, for your own behoof while you live, and for the support and comfort of your family after your decease. We could have wished that the sum had been more adequate to your just and well-earned claims ; but such as it is, we have now to request your acceptance of it, and along with it, of our affectionate prayers that you may live long to enjoy it amid your attached family and numerous and grateful admirers.

'We are, in name of the Subscribers,

'Rev. and honoured Sir,

'Yours with much affection.'

THE END.



